



1995

# The Garden in the Machine: The Cultural Landscape of the Urban Major League Baseball Parks of 1909-1923

Matthew Bolster Bronski  
*University of Pennsylvania*

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## **Disciplines**

Historic Preservation and Conservation

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THE GARDEN IN THE MACHINE:  
THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE URBAN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL  
PARKS OF 1909-1923

Matthew Bolster Bronski

A THESIS

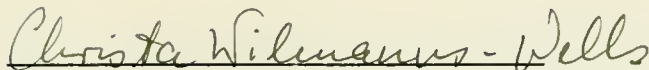
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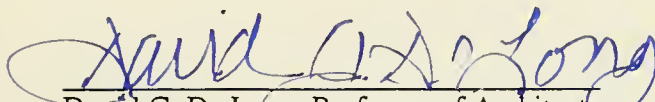
Presented to the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1995



Christa Wilmanns-Wells, Lecturer, Historic Preservation, Advisor



David G. De Long, Professor of Architecture  
Reader and Graduate Group Chairman

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## INTRODUCTION:

There are places in any culture which begin to have special meanings within that culture. To examine such places is to begin to understand the ideas, beliefs, and values and aspirations of the culture.

It was too small. The public urinals were fetid troughs. Its architecture suggested a mail order tool shed, and every August the grass began to die. Then work crews had to spray the outfield with green paint. There weren't enough seats and the parking was impossible... When the wreckers came in 1957, I felt no pangs. Walter O'Malley was a money man. The place was too damn small. Let it go, let it go, like the past. Now through the years it haunts me like the fresh faced ardent girl you never married...<sup>1</sup>

Roger Kahn, on Ebbets Field

During the years 1909-1923 fifteen steel and concrete baseball parks, including Ebbets Field, were constructed specifically for major league use. These ballparks hold a seemingly unique fascination for the American public. While little has been written regarding the arenas and stadia of other American professional sports, a great deal has been published concerning America's baseball parks in recent years. Numerous books and countless articles have been published about the American baseball parks, often with special attention to those of the 1909-1923 era. Some literature vehemently argues the virtues of the "classic" or "traditional urban" ballparks, as those of the 1909-1923 era are often called, over their eventual successors, the "modern" stadia.<sup>2</sup> Bill Goff Enterprises, an Art Dealer operating out of Kent, Connecticut, deals almost exclusively in prints of baseball parks and offers prints of as many as a dozen different paintings of the most popular parks. Not surprisingly, the most popular parks are Ebbets Field, Fenway Park,

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<sup>1</sup>Roger Kahn, "In the Catbird Seat," *Sports Illustrated*, 5 August 1984, 34,41.

<sup>2</sup>Philip Bess, *City Baseball Magic: Plain Talk and Uncommon Sense about Cities and Baseball Parks* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Review of Baseball, 1989).



and Wrigley Field, all built in the 1909-1923 era. The Tiger Stadium Fanclub, a grassroots organization, was formed when the Detroit Tigers ownership began publicizing their purported need for a new stadium. This organization, formed for the purpose of saving Tiger Stadium from destruction, has political power which is not to be underestimated. A recent congressional bill introduced by the Representative David Bonior (D-Michigan) aims to protect the three surviving ballparks of the 1909-1923 era from destruction. Under Bonior's proposal, these parks would be incorporated into the National Park System if and when Major League Baseball no longer has a need for them. The attachment that the American people feel to the ballparks of this era is perhaps unrivaled by the sentiment expressed for any other particular architectural type of a specific period. Could something deeper than mere nostalgia have so firmly ingrained these ballparks in the public imagination?

Giamatti and Ross have described how the game of baseball embodies American values.<sup>3</sup> Reiss and Kuklick have described how the game of baseball affected the social and physical development around the ballparks and acted as a socializing force for immigrants.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, the major league baseball parks of 1909-1923 are significant because of this history. However, their significance is more complex. For these ballparks are a *place* of overwhelming importance within the American culture. Here I shall use the definition of a *place* as "a center of meaning, constructed by experience."<sup>5</sup> These places objectify America's deepest aspirations and function as a "cognitive map."

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<sup>3</sup>A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Baseball and the American Character," *Harpers*, October 1988, 27,30; and A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Take Time for Paradise: Americans and their Games* (New York: Summit Books, 1989).

<sup>4</sup>Steven Reiss, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980); and Bruce Kuklick, *To Every Thing a Season: Shibe Park and Urban Philadelphia, 1909-1976* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>5</sup>Yi-Fu Tuan, "Place: An Experiential Perspective," *Geographical Review* 65 (1975): 152.



In the first three chapters, I will examine the game of baseball itself and the manner in which it objectifies American ideals. In the second chapter I will examine and discuss the cultural content within which the major league baseball parks of 1909-1923 arose. In the final chapter, I will summarize my findings and state conclusions.



## FIRST:

Before further examining the ballparks of 1909-1923 and their cultural content, it seems necessary to consider and describe, if ever so briefly, the game of baseball itself as an experience which embodies and reflects our American democracy. Like much of America itself, baseball's origins trace back to England. The games which are baseball's most direct predecessors can be traced back to the pre-industrial era of Stuart England, and were brought to the English colonies in America with the series of migrations which began in 1620.<sup>6</sup>

Baseball's most immediate ancestor was the English game of rounders. A study in 1939 by Robert W. Henderson, a librarian, revealed that the early rules for rounders and baseball were at first identical. As early as 1744, a children's pocket book was published in London which contained a description of "base-ball" along with an illustration depicting the game. It was republished in several American cities between 1762 and 1787.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, Americans were playing something called "base-ball" even before the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the new nation.<sup>8</sup>

The number of players on each side was not set; the group was simply divided into two equal sides. The positions were not set, with the exception of the "feeder" or "pecker" (pitcher), who tossed the ball to the "striker" (hitter) from a position also marked by a post or stone. The remaining players on the "out" side scattered about the

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<sup>6</sup>Robert F. Burk, *Never Just a Game: Players, Owners, and American Baseball to 1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 1.

<sup>7</sup>Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years* (New York: Oxford Press, 1960), 5.

<sup>8</sup>A. Bartlett Giamatti, "A Ballpark is Freedom's Ring," in "Literati on the Red Sox," ed. Vince Doria, *Boston Globe*, 6 October 1986, special section, 18.







Fig.1: The earliest known illustration of the game, from *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* (Worcester, 1787), an American reprint of the 1744 London edition published by John Newberry. Reprinted in Seymour, *Baseball*, 6.

field. The striker ran clockwise around the bases if he succeeded in making contact with the ball. A striker was out if he hit the ball behind his position (foul), if his batted ball was caught, if he was hit with a thrown ball, or if he missed three swings.<sup>9</sup>

Rounders was played on a field in which four posts or stones were set from twelve to twenty yards apart in a diamond shaped pattern.<sup>10</sup> Early on, the ballfield had few distinguishing characteristics. The land was surveyed by human measure (eyeing the angles and pacing the distances), and points were marked which served to order and organize the subsequent activities. While this laying out of the baseball field was no different than the process English children undertook for rounders, in retrospect, this

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<sup>9</sup>Seymour, *Baseball*, 5.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*



process seems particularly well suited for the inhabitants of the American continent. The process of laying out the field by placing stones or driving stakes or posts into the ground involved, in a simple way, the transformation of a vast, unordered area of land into one which was defined and ordered.

In rounders as well as in early variations of baseball such as town ball, the number of players on each side was not fixed. Those on hand were simply divided into two groups of equal numbers. In town ball, as the name implies, there were often large numbers involved. The players were too densely situated across the field for each to be solely responsible for an area of land. It is significant that as the game evolved, the number of players on each side became fixed at nine. With only nine on a side, each fielder is clearly and solely responsible for an area of land, objectifying the values of individualism and self-sufficiency which were held paramount in an agrarian democracy.

Although it was initially a children's game, baseball was soon played by adults. In 1786, a Princeton student wrote in his diary of playing a game of "baste ball" on campus. George Ewing, a Revolutionary War soldier, wrote in his journal of playing a game of "base" at Valley Forge on April 7, 1788. According to the autobiography of Thurlow Weed, a political boss in upstate New York, Rochester had a baseball club in 1825 which included some of the city's leading citizens.<sup>11</sup> On July 19, 1846, the first organized baseball game played under "modern" rules took place. The Knickerbockers Baseball Club of New York and the New York Baseball Club engaged in the contest at the Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey. Baseball became popular with women as well

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 5-6.



as men. Baseball clubs were formed at women's colleges as early as 1866, only seven years after the first men's intercollegiate baseball game.<sup>12</sup>

What is the game of baseball? Is it a simple leisure activity? Is it entertainment? Is it art? Leonard O'Brien has written thoughtfully on the subject, arriving at the conclusion that "Sport is not art... Sport is our appreciative awareness of relationships within a protected process of seeking to realize our aspirations."<sup>13</sup> Bart Giamatti wrote that one can learn a great deal about a people by contemplating the manner in which they choose to play.<sup>14</sup> Many have said that the game of baseball reflects America.<sup>15</sup> Might the game of baseball in some way embody our collective aspirations as a nation?

Baseball is often said to be a pastoral game. Some writings on baseball history debate the notion that baseball is a pastoral game, pointing to the fact that the "modern" game of baseball first gained popularity as an organized sport among the men's clubs in and around New York City in the 1840's.<sup>16</sup> However, the pastoral aspect of baseball is far more deeply embedded in the game than by the mere reason of the specific location where its "modern" rules first emerged. Arguably, the game evolved beginning in the mid 1700's through the years of an American agrarian society, so that in the form of the game

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<sup>12</sup>Gai I. Berlage, "Sociocultural History of the Origin of Women's Baseball at the Eastern Women's Colleges During the Victorian Period," in *Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and the American Culture*, ed. Alvin Hall (Westport, Connecticut: Meckler, 1989), 100.

<sup>13</sup>Leonard O'Brien, "Aluminum Bats and the Purpose of Baseball," in *Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and the American Culture*, ed. Alvin Hall (Westport, Connecticut: Meckler, 1990), 390.

<sup>14</sup>A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Take Time for Paradise*, 12.

<sup>15</sup>Jacques Barzun's often quoted line that "Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball, the rules and realities of the game..." is perhaps the definitive reference. See Jacques Barzun, *God's Country and Mine: A Declaration of Love Spiced with a Few Harsh Words* (Boston: Little Brown, 1954), 159.

<sup>16</sup>Joel Zoss and John Bowman, *Diamonds in the Rough: The Untold History of Baseball* (New York: MacMillan, 1989), 40.





itself, the values of an agrarian democracy were objectified and permanently preserved. In baseball, individualism and self-sufficiency are held paramount. No other team sport places such a tremendous premium on the individual. As Bart Giamatti notes, "The players are sufficiently separated on the field, such that one cannot hide from responsibility in a crowd, the way one can in football or in congress."<sup>17</sup> Each fielder is responsible for a separate area of land, and the team in the field is in control. Indeed, it is the only sport in which the defense has the ball. The fielders almost never come into contact. One cannot aid another by making a block or a setting pick on an opponent, the way one can in football or basketball. Rather, the fate of the group is dependent upon the individual acts of those who comprise it, as in a democracy. Each player has as much time at bat as he needs or earns. The game is not regulated by the hegemonic control of a clock. As in all pastorals, time would be completely out of place in baseball.<sup>18</sup> There is an agrarian sense to the season, which begins in the spring with the first signs of green and ends in the brisk October air of harvest. The game is egalitarian. Unlike football or basketball, it does not place a premium on God given body types or physical attributes. People of any size or weight can play. In baseball only ability and effort matter.

The field of play is itself a cultivated green. After the Union Grounds in Brooklyn in 1862, the baseball park became an enclosed cultivated green, further reinforcing the notion of the field as an enclosed garden. In the major league ballparks of 1909-1923, the spatial contrast between the density of the urban fabric outside the park, and the enclosed green within the park, reached its pinnacle.

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<sup>17</sup>A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Baseball and the American Character," 27.

<sup>18</sup>Murray Ross, "Football Red and Baseball Green," in *75 Readings: An Anthology*, ed. Lesley Denton, Laurie DiSierre and Tom Holton, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 215-224.





In numerous oral and written accounts, it becomes clear that the moment at which one first emerges in the ballpark and glimpses the perfect greenness of the field is an almost universally powerful experience, whether enjoyed by a non-American viewing her first ever ballgame, or a professional baseball player who has trod upon countless diamonds.

It was a sunny September Sunday... I was fresh off the plane from Israel. It was only my second day in the United States, but my friends had made the shocked discovery that I had never even seen a baseball diamond. So they took me out to the ballgame... (at Yankee Stadium) Maybe it was in comparison with the parched brown of Israel at summer's end. Maybe it was the combined smell of hot dogs and marijuana drifting over the stands. Maybe it was the light. All I know for sure is that when I emerged from the tunnel and stood there in the first tier, looking out over home base, I gasped at the perfect greenness of it.<sup>19</sup>

Former Boston Red Sox pitcher Bill Lee recalled on film the first time he saw Boston's Fenway Park:

Fenway Park  
When I first saw it  
I drove by it...

and I couldn't find the park

And when I found it I said  
'This is not a park -  
this is a factory'  
And the brick facade  
And the little red door on Yawkey Way  
(It was called Jersey Street back then)

And then you walk through the gates  
And you come through the little tunnel  
And then all of a sudden you see the green -  
The green of the seats  
The green of the wall  
The green of the field

---

<sup>19</sup>Lesley Hazleton, in *Diamonds Are Forever: Artists and Writers on Baseball*, ed. Peter H. Gordon, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1987), 14. The parenthetical phrase is mine.



And the little dirt cut-out  
And the proximity of the foul line to the stands  
And... just the closeness of the bullpens to the crowd  
And it's like -  
You go down all of a sudden on one knee  
And you bless yourself  
And you go -  
Thank God for making me a ballplayer  
'Cause it's heaven<sup>20</sup>

In both accounts, the emphasis on the green cannot be overstated. The perfect greenness of the field and, in the second account, the greenness of the park itself is a fundamental part of the experience of the place. Roger Kahn's description of Ebbets Field, with which I began this chapter, is worth another look. "Its architecture suggested a mail order tool shed, and every August the grass began to die. Then work crews had to spray the outfield with green paint."<sup>21</sup> The grounds crew did not leave the dying grass brown. Nor does Kahn write that work crews *sprayed* the grass with green paint. He writes that they *had to* spray the grass with green paint. The perfect greenness of the enclosed green, even if it is akin to illusion, is of overwhelming importance. Bart Giamatti wrote:

One cannot underestimate the impact on the American mind of the image, whether derived from the Bible or the classics, of the contained green space. The force of such imagery may be the reason why some 45 million people a summer flow to baseball parks in the midst of the urban wilderness, flow in big cities to places which recall in some distant way the place that promised perfection, whose name we derive from the enclosed park of the Persian King, paradise.<sup>22</sup>

When Lee relates the enclosed, cultivated green of Fenway Park to heaven, one is reminded of the eighteenth century image of America as the garden of the new world. The

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<sup>20</sup>William F. Lee III, in *Baseball*, a P.B.S. Television Documentary Film, executive producer Ken Burns, Florentine Films, 1994. The punctuation is mine. Thanks to Barbara L. Davis for the transcription.

<sup>21</sup>Kahn, "In the Catbird Seat," 34.

<sup>22</sup>Giamatti, "A Ballpark is Freedom's Ring," 18.



symbol of Jefferson's America was not the wilderness, but the cultivated green, an edenic garden. The America of Jefferson probably bore little resemblance to a divine garden, however, this image of a virtuous agrarian democracy became mythologized as an image of America, or, at the very least, as an image of America's oldest and most fundamental beliefs and deepest dreams.

In the spatiality of the baseball field one can see the sensibilities of an American agrarian society which viewed the vast continent as the "garden of the new world." It is revealing that the American pastime evolved from the English children's game of rounders, rather than the game of cricket, which was popular with adults. It is significant that the baseball field *opens*, rather than *encloses* space.<sup>23</sup> This entails a completely different notion of space than other playing fields, courts and surfaces. Other Anglo team sports, including cricket, enclose space by delineating it in rectilinear fashion, usually with boundaries on four sides. However, a baseball field is described by the theoretically infinite extension of two perpendicular lines, which do not bound, but rather *open* space.<sup>24</sup> Opening from a ninety degree angle, the apex of which is home plate, these two lines diverge describing an ever increasing area of land. Thus the field encompasses the distant landscape, its variations, and its topographic features. While the outfield is vast and extends infinitely out into the landscape, the infield, by way of contrast, is finite and precisely defined. Its measurements are exacting: home plate is 17-1/2" wide, from home plate to the pitcher's mound is 60'-6", from home plate to second base is 127'-4". This spatial organization of the field, with a precisely defined, well ordered, and densely occupied apex, extending off to a sparsely occupied, vast, unbounded expanse, objectifies

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<sup>23</sup>George Grella, "Baseball and the American Dream," *The Massachusetts Review*, (Summer, 1975): 563.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*



the spatial disposition of the continent during the years of an American agrarian society. The baseball field itself then may be considered a cultural landscape, for it evolved over time as a common shared landscape which came to reflect and objectify the ideas, beliefs, and values of the culture within which it evolved.





## SECOND:

Like the field itself, the major league baseball parks of 1909-1923 developed over time and came to reflect and objectify ideas, beliefs and values of the culture within which they evolved. Hence, in referring throughout this text to the baseball parks of 1909-1923, I refer not to the physical artifact when it first opened, but to the most recent state to which it has evolved, or to its latest state before demolition. Because of this evolution over time, and because of the spatial complexity of the ballparks, which include elements of structure, enclosure, and grounds, the ballparks of 1909-1923 are herewith considered also as landscapes rather than exclusively as buildings.

The urban baseball parks of 1909-1923 are not "high architecture" nor are they, necessarily, the work of a master designer. Eleven of the fifteen major league ballparks of 1909-23 were initially designed by the Osborn Engineering Company of Cleveland, Ohio. Frank Osborn, a structural engineer, had made a name for himself as the chief bridge designer of the King Bridge Company, and the standards for strength he developed for steel and concrete design translated well to the demands of designing the new steel and concrete baseball parks.<sup>25</sup> In the ordinary, practical manner in which they were designed and built, in the ad hoc manner in which they grew and evolved, and in the manner in which people would interact and become a part of the events there, these ballparks came to represent a common shared landscape.

The changes over time which will be discussed in the third chapter reflect the evolution and refinement of an ideal or an aspiration as the evolution of the field and the game itself came to objectify the ideals of an agrarian democracy. Changes in the

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<sup>25</sup>"Plans," *New Yorker*, 18 September 1989, 34-35.



boundaries and spaces of these ballparks can also reflect the changing ideas of those who make and use them. As J.B. Jackson relates:

The network of boundaries, private as well as public, transforms an amorphous environment into a human landscape, and nothing more clearly shows some of the cherished values of a group than the manner in which they fix those boundaries, the manner in which they organize space. And because these values change in the course of time, the organization of space also undergoes a change.<sup>26</sup>

In studying the meaning of architecture, historians have often focused on the monuments and the great works of architecture.<sup>27</sup> While these "high works" of architecture undoubtedly embody meaning, the "common works" are also objects of cultural production and necessarily embody meaning within the culture in which they were produced. This meaning may be consciously articulated or subconsciously manifested, but it is nonetheless present in the artifact, regardless of intent. Anthropology presents evidence that it is not only the monumental temple, but also the simple jug which may provide evidence of the ideas, beliefs and values of the civilization within which it was produced. Thus even the most common artifact itself may be read and interpreted. As David Lubat and W. David Kingery have written:

Artifacts are remnants of the environment of earlier periods, a portion of the historical experience available for direct observation. Not only do artifacts present new evidence to support historical arguments; they also suggest new arguments and provide a level of rhetorical support to arguments that mere documents cannot begin to approach. Artifacts, especially when used in conjunction with the sort of history gleaned from

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<sup>26</sup>John Brickerhoff Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 115.

<sup>27</sup>Referring to almost any textbook for an architectural survey course will support this contention. Two common examples are: Spiro Kostoff, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Christian Norberg Schulz, *Meaning in Western Architecture* (New York: Praeger, 1975).



documentary sources, widen our view of history as they increase the evidence for historical interpretations.<sup>28</sup>

Ebbets Field opened on April 5, 1913. This paper will go on to show that it existed as part of a succession of manifestations of an American ideal of a "middle state" where the virtues of both pastoral simplicity and urban technology coexist and could be simultaneously enjoyed. However, while they embodied some meaning at the time of their opening, the urban ballparks of 1909-1923 acquired much of their meaning as they evolved over time and were modified and expanded in an ad-hoc manner.

Eleven of the fifteen major league ballparks of this era were designed by the Osborne Engineering Company. Dale Sveringen, current Vice President of Osborne, said in an interview with the author that "the idea behind these parks was to get as many people as close to the field as possible".<sup>29</sup> Does this statement regarding the designer's intent preclude any further interpretation of these parks? Not necessarily, because meaning exists outside of the designer's intent; meaning also resides in use and process and evolves over time. Sveringen and Bess have written that the closer proximity of the stands to the playing field (particularly the upper decks) made the ballparks of 1909-1923 more intimate than later stadiums. They have also stated that these "classic" era ballparks fit tightly into their urban context, and that the constraints of the city streets and the urban fabric gave rise to the asymmetrical configurations and idiosyncrasies which characterize these ballparks and make each park distinctive. But to stop there in examining the spatial disposition of the ballparks of 1909-1923 and their generating predilections is to not see the forest for the trees. The major league ballparks of 1909-1923 were objects of cultural

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<sup>28</sup>Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery, *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), ix.

<sup>29</sup>Dale Sveringen, conversation with the author, Cleveland, 20 September 1991.





well ordered garden. Although his metaphor dated back at least to 1654, Thomas Barnard urged Americans in 1758 to "make a Wilderness, in a moral as well as a natural sense, a Fruitful Field."<sup>31</sup> Also in 1758 Richard Price, an English friend of Thomas Jefferson, championed this idea of a middle ground in writing that: "The happiest state of man is the middle state between the savage and the refined, or between the wild and the luxurious state. Such is the state of society in CONNECTICUT and some of the other American provinces...".<sup>32</sup> This image of American aspirations was located, both physically and conceptually, between the overcrowded cities of Europe to the east and the raw untamed wilderness to the west. For Thomas Jefferson, this national image had not only spatial but political and social ramifications. Jefferson took pride in the virtue of the independent farmer as part of the national image. His famous quote: "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue,"<sup>33</sup> reflects his notion that the moral strength of the young democratic republic lay in the independent farmers who composed the nation. Jefferson believed this made America more virtuous than the crowded industrial cities of Europe. In the eyes of Jefferson and his contemporaries, political morality would decline, and the experiment of the young republic would be doomed if industrial cities came to exert a controlling influence on American life.<sup>34</sup> Others echoed Jefferson's sentiments, including David Howell, a professor from Providence, and Philip Barton Key, a lawyer from Annapolis, and even Benjamin Franklin, as sophisticated an

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<sup>31</sup>Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 7.

<sup>32</sup>Richard Price, *Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution* (Dublin: L. White, 1785), 69.

<sup>33</sup>Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. Thomas P. Abernathy (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1964), 157.

<sup>34</sup>Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*, 6.





urbanite as was to be found in colonial America.<sup>35</sup> With no less than the fate of the democratic experiment and the morality of its inhabitants at stake, it's not surprising that the debate over the industrialization of America encouraged such impassioned debate. So firmly entrenched was the definition of America as an agrarian nation that early proponents for manufacturing couched their arguments for industrialization within the agrarian vision. As Tench Coxe wrote: "The encouragement to agriculture, afforded by some manufactories, is a reason of solid weight in favor of carrying them on with industry and spirit," and he went on to sum up that "...we may come to the following conclusions --- That the United States of America cannot make a proper use of the natural advantages of the country, nor promote her agriculture and other interests without manufactures."<sup>36</sup> As Bender sees it:

According to the agrarian ideal, the great drama of American history was the conversion of a barren wilderness into a fruitful field - a cultivated or productive landscape. It was a grand opportunity for the defenders of American industrialism. If they could show that manufacturing in America was close to nature and was, in fact, simply another form of making unimproved nature productive, then the industrial system might be accommodated into an expanded version of the Jeffersonian legacy.<sup>37</sup>

Coxe couched his argument for manufacturing within the agrarian vision, viewing manufacturing as another means of taking advantage of the bounty of natural resources with which America was gifted. He wrote:

Providence has bestowed upon the United States of America means of great happiness, as great and numerous, as are enjoyed by any country in the world. A soil fruitful and diversified --- a healthy climate --- mighty rivers and adjacent seas abounding with fish are the great advantages for

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>36</sup>Tench Coxe, *A View of the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Hall and Wrigley & Berriman, 1794), 15, 20-21.

<sup>37</sup>Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*, 42-43.



which we are indebted to a beneficent creator. Agriculture, manufactures and commerce, naturally arising from these sources...<sup>38</sup>

More specifically, Coxe argued that the "clear air and powerful sun" of America made our bleaching manufactures superior to their European counterparts, whose process by drugs and machines impaired the strength of the cloth.<sup>39</sup> The spatial disposition and landscape image of America's manufactories at Waltham and Lowell played into Coxe's argument perfectly. While the image of English industrialism was one of the overcrowded, fuliginous industrial cities with wretched people working in foreboding factories, the image of American manufacturing was one of wholesome mill girls in a bucolic setting in a neat factory on the banks of a swiftly flowing river. Many who favored industrialization argued that the vast, virtually unbounded expanse of land to the west was insurance that America would never come to resemble the overcrowded industrial cities of Europe.<sup>40</sup> However, the eventual acceptance of industrial technology in America implied a radical redefinition of the domestic landscape.

Americans of all classes were confronted with the same traumatic dilemma: How would Americans, who had always defined their country in terms of the agrarian ideal reconcile America's pastoral past with the newly emerging industrial technology which was imposing itself on the American landscape, and was thereby transforming the garden of the new world? Ralph Waldo Emerson "wished to see the physical city become more creatively related to its natural hinterland, and more internally 'natural' or 'organic.'"<sup>41</sup> This desire did not belong to Emerson alone. Lewis Mumford has written that:

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<sup>38</sup>Coxe, *A View of the United States*, 36.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>40</sup>Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*, 42.

<sup>41</sup>Michael H. Cowan, *City of the West: Emerson, America and Urban Metaphor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 183.



Between 1800 and 1860, roughly, it looked as if the romantic personality and the utilitarian personality might exist harmoniously side by side...Many of the leading minds --- Audubon, F.L. Olmstead, Emerson, Marsh, Melville, Whitman, among others --- could, with a wholeness of response, embrace the scientific and mechanical and the industrial and at the same time place these within the ample framework of man's natural and humanistic heritage."<sup>42</sup>

Rather than emulating the efforts of Jefferson and Franklin to ignore or downplay the importance of the city in the American landscape, mid-century writers and social thinkers accepted the challenge of urban industrialism without abandoning their commitment to the cultivated landscape. While Jefferson and his contemporaries had conceived of a cultivated middle state between the overcrowded cities of Europe and the untamed wilderness to the west, mid-century social thinkers began to conceive of a place where both city and country could simultaneously coexist and be enjoyed.<sup>43</sup>

Various types of pastoralism have been defined by Leo Marx in his seminal work, *The Machine in the Garden*. While Marx's work has met with criticism, and others such as Machor and Bender have furthered some of Marx's ideas, *The Machine in the Garden* is still highly useful to us as an extended definition of different types of pastoralism. Marx classifies pastoral modes into two types: one which is popular and sentimental, and the other which is imaginative and complex. Sentimental or romantic pastoralism is less profound. It may be characterized by the yearning for a simpler, more harmonious life which is closer to nature. The "pastoral design," the more complex and imaginative type of pastoralism, goes beyond a simple affirmation of the harmony of rural life and brings some order of civilization to bear against the idyllic vision.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Lewis Mumford, "The Megamachine - I," *New Yorker*, 10 October 1970, 66.

<sup>43</sup>Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*, 16-17.





In addition to the ideal, then, the pastoral design embraces some vision of a more complicated order of experience... this feature of the design brings a world which is more real into juxtaposition with an idyllic vision. It may be called the counterforce... For it is industrialization, represented by images of machine technology, that provides the counterforce in the American Pastoral Design.<sup>45</sup>

Marx cites numerous literary examples of the more complex order; "American Pastoral Design." Thoreau is shocked by the shrill whistle of a locomotive in *Walden*. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck and Jim are lazily floating downstream on a raft when a steamboat suddenly churns around the bend, smashing their raft. As Ishmael explores inside the cavernous remains of a beached whale in *Moby Dick*, the scene shifts startlingly to become a New England textile mill. While it may be easy to underestimate the complexity of these confrontations of industrial technology with idyllic simplicity, Marx focuses on the July 27, 1844 notes of Nathaniel Hawthorne (referred to as "The Sleepy Hollow Episode") to analyze the complexity of the quite sudden and unexpected arrival of a locomotive in the Concord woods where he sat quietly observing nature:<sup>46</sup>

But the fact is that nothing quite like the event announced by the train in the woods has occurred before. A sense of history as an unpredictable, irreversible sequence of events makes itself felt even in Hawthorne's notes. ...the "little event" creates an unprecedented situation. For in the stock contrast between city and country each had been assumed to occupy two more or less fixed locations in space: the country here, the city there. But in 1844, the sound of a train in the Concord woods implies a radical change in the conventional pattern. Now the great world is invading the land, transforming the sensory texture of rural life - the way it looks and sounds - and threatening in fact to impose a new and more complete dominion over it. ... The distinctive attribute of the new order is its technological power, a power that does not remain confined to the traditional boundaries of the city. It is a centrifugal force that threatens to break down once and for all the conventional contrast between these two

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<sup>44</sup>Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, 5-6, 24-25.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 25-26.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 13.





styles of life. The Sleepy Hollow episode prefigures the emergence after 1844 of a new, distinctly American, post romantic version of the pastoral design.<sup>47</sup>

In his excellent book *Pastoral Cities*, James Machor furthers the work which Marx began. His exegesis of Walt Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" is particularly insightful.<sup>48</sup> Marx unnecessarily limited his examples of American Pastoral Design to the high works of American literature. However, an American folk legend provides one of the most powerful episodes in which a new technological force invades the countryside, transforming the texture of life, threatening to impose a new dominion over it.

The legend of John Henry takes place in the wild countryside where John Henry, the greatest steel driving man who ever lived, is transforming the untamed land by helping to drive a railroad tunnel through solid rock. In this folk legend, the strong, noble individual working with only a hammer, a drill, and his bare hands, races against the tireless new machine to see who could drill farther in a single day. At the end of the day, having won the race, John Henry dropped dead.<sup>49</sup>

While folk legends are not as easily documentable as the high works of literature, they are significant in that they describe something of the beliefs and values of the common people. The lighthearted folktales of Paul Bunyan and his ox spoke of the seemingly incomprehensible size of the American continent and the vastness of its

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<sup>47</sup>Marx, 32.

<sup>48</sup>James L. Machor, *Pastoral Cities: Urban Ideals and the Symbolic Landscape of America* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 176-188.

<sup>49</sup>For a scholarly study of the John Henry legend and its factual basis, see Guy B. Johnson, *John Henry: Tracking Down a Negro Legend* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929), especially chapters 2 and 3.

# THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST

IN WHICH ARE CONTAINED  
THE  
MOST IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING  
CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS REIGN  
FROM THE BEGINNING OF HIS  
MAYESTY'S REIGN TO THE  
END OF HIS REIGN

BY  
JOHN BURNET

IN TWO VOLUMES.  
THE FIRST VOLUME.  
FROM THE BEGINNING OF HIS  
MAYESTY'S REIGN TO THE  
END OF HIS REIGN  
IN THE YEAR 1649

THE SECOND VOLUME.  
FROM THE BEGINNING OF HIS  
MAYESTY'S REIGN TO THE  
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resources. The legend of Johnny Appleseed mythologized the role of one noble individual in the transformation of America from a raw wilderness to a bountiful cultivated garden. The legend of John Henry, with its more ominous tone and dark ending, speaks of the trauma of the confrontation of mechanized technology with a simpler existence and the place of the individual within the new order.

The trauma of this confrontation survives in other accounts. The early factory workers of Lowell were uniquely close to both the agrarian life of a New England farm, and the routine of factory life in Lowell, and these articulate "mill girls" left well documented accounts of their situation.<sup>50</sup> Lucy Larcom, a mill girl who went on to become a poet and writer, would later write of her impressions of Lowell:

It did not take us younger ones long to get acquainted with our new home, and to love it.

To live beside a river had been to me a child's dream of romance...And the Merrimack was like a continuation of that dream...

No matter if we must get up at five the next morning and go back to our humdrum toil, we should have the roses to take with us for company, and the sweet air of the woodland which lingered about them would scent our thoughts all day, and forget the oily smell of the machinery.<sup>51</sup>

Miss Larcom goes on to describe the landscape of Lowell:

We were children still, whether at school or at work, and Nature still held us close to her motherly heart. Nature came very close to the mill-gates, too, in those days. There was green grass all around; violets and wild geraniums grew by the canals; and long stretches of open land between the corporation buildings and the street made the town seem country-like.

The slope behind our mills (the "Lawrence" Mills) was a green lawn; and in front of some of them the overseer had gay flower - gardens; we passed in to our work through the splendor of dahlias and hollyhocks.

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<sup>50</sup>Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*, 60-61.

<sup>51</sup>Lucy Larcom, *A New England Girlhood* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1889), 162-163.



The gray stone walls of St. Anne's Church and rectory made a picturesque spot in the middle of the town, remaining still as a lasting monument to the religious purpose which animated the first manufactures. The church arose close to the oldest corporation (the "Merrimack"), and seemed a part of it...

And so, also, was the tiny white cottage set nearly opposite, set in the middle of a pretty flower garden that sloped down to the canal... The town had sprung up with a mushroom - rapidity, and there was no attempt at veiling the newness of its bricks and mortar, its boards and paint.<sup>52</sup>

While Larcom praised the middle state of Lowell, she would eventually fall to the same fate as John Henry:

My return to mill - work involved making acquaintance with a new kind of machinery...for the dressing - frame itself was a large, clumsy affair, that occupied a great deal of space. Mine seemed to be as unmanageable as an overgrown spoilt child. It had to be watched in a dozen directions every minute, and even then it was always getting itself and me into trouble. I felt as if the half - live creature, with its great, groaning joints and whizzing fan, was aware of my capacity to manage it, and had a fiendish spite against me. I contracted an unconquerable dislike to it; indeed, I had never liked, and never could learn to like, any kind of machinery. And this machine finally conquered me. It was humiliating, but I had to acknowledge that there were some things I could not do, and I retired from the field, vanquished.<sup>53</sup>

One of Lowell's mill girls, Harriet Farley, published a particularly poignant account of the transformation of Lowell in the *Lowell Offering* under the pseudonym of Ella. The story is an account of the changing view from her window. She opens with praise for the middle landscape image:

"I had a lovely view from my window...; it was neither city nor country exclusively, but a combination of both." It "was like a beautiful picture." The window provided constant pleasure and instruction, but one day "my window told me that there was to be laid the foundation of a mighty structure." When the foundation was completed, "the walls [were]

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 163-164.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 226.





commenced." Boats came up the river laden with brick, "and huge piles arose upon its banks. The red walls arose - red, the color of the conqueror - and they proclaimed a victory over my pleasures." With one story completed, the pleasant dwellings were "screened from me" and the "early sunrise was gone." But "I clung more fervently" to the views that were left - "the more tenaciously as I saw them departing." "Then I began to measure...and to calculate how long I would retain this or that beauty." I hoped that the "brow of the hill" would remain when the structure was complete. "But no! I had not calculated wisely." It "began to recede from me - for the building rose still higher and higher." Will anything be left "One hope after another is gone...one image after another, that has been beautiful to our eye, and dear to our heart has disappeared." "How has the scene changed! How is our window darkened!"<sup>54</sup>

Harriet Farley's account is particularly important to the discussion presented here, because the profound coexistence of the urban and industrial with the pastoral and bucolic is not merely a literary device, but a desirable and tangible physical condition. Harriet Farley is lamenting not merely the loss of her view, but more importantly, the loss of the physical state which was a combination of both city and country.

Lowell, Massachusetts in the 1820's did represent one realization of a middle landscape with the mills of the textile industry dotting the green fields and the banks of the Merrimack River. While the large mill buildings of Lowell embodied urbanity, their simple brick exteriors lacked the powerful image of the machine technology housed within (Marx's "technological counterforce") which Melville used so effectively in *Moby Dick*. With the expansion of the textile mills in the late 1820's and the 1830's, Lowell was losing its legibility as a middle landscape which balanced "art" (technology) with nature. In the eyes of mid-century Americans, Lowell began to take on a more urban appearance in the 1830's. By the 1840's, it was obviously an industrial city.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*, 78-79.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid*, 76-77.







Fig. 2: East Chelmsford (Lowell) in 1825.



Fig. 3: Lowell in 1833.

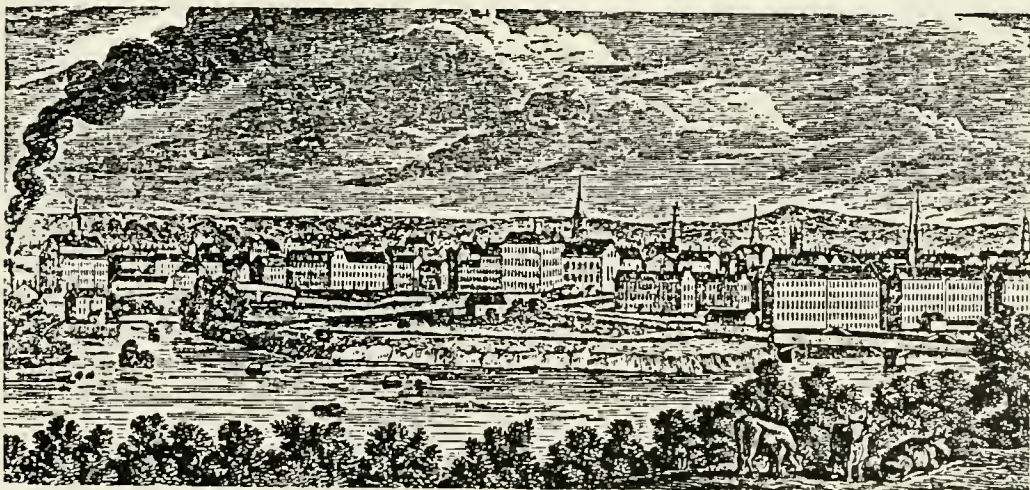


Fig. 4: Lowell in 1839.

Figs. 2-4 are from Bender, *Toward and Urban Vision*, 180-181.



As a middle landscape in the mid 1820's, Lowell was unable to maintain the spatial balance of "the machine in the garden" in the wake of expanding industry. In examining Lowell, it is easy to see why some historians have criticized the "middle landscape" ideal as being too static to accommodate the growth of industry and urbanization.<sup>56</sup> While Lowell illustrates the limitations of its approach to the middle landscape, a shift in sensibility was just occurring. As Thomas Bender writes:

Mid century Lowellians, and Americans in general, abandoned the factory-in-the-forest imagery and began to visualize the cityscape and natural landscape in close proximity, but clearly demarcated. Cities would be granted their essential urbanity, but easy and occasional access to nature would be sought for and by the urbanite. Instead of a continuous middle landscape, America would be defined as a counterpoint of art and nature, city and country.<sup>57</sup>

Ralph Waldo Emerson provides an important link between the literary devices of American Pastoral Design and the yearning for a physical place which is *both* city and country, where both urban technology and pastoral simplicity coexist and can be simultaneously enjoyed. "I wish to have rural strength and religion for my children," Emerson wrote in 1844, "and I wish city facility and polish. I find with chagrin that I can not have both."<sup>58</sup>

While the terminology used to describe this nineteenth century American dichotomy varies, the dichotomy itself is one and the same. Whether we hear it described as "rural strength and religion" with "city facility and polish", agrarian virtue with industrial progress, pastoral simplicity with urban technology, or simply city with

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>58</sup>Cowan, *City of the West*, 215.





country, it is nonetheless the same dichotomy. Emerson lamented that he could not have both. At Lowell, Harriet Farley was briefly able to enjoy both, but dismayed by the disappearance of this unique middle state in the wake of industrial expansion. However, other more lasting manifestations of this middle state occurred after Lowell.

Throughout the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, landscape architects played an important role in the planning of American cities. As Ross Miller has pointed out, the challenge they faced was "how to maintain cultural ideas associated with a preurban society in the face of rapid industrialization."<sup>59</sup> The rural cemeteries were in part an answer to this question. The first of these was Mt. Auburn Cemetery, established in Cambridge Massachusetts in 1831 by Dr. Jacob Bigelow and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. Like other medical professionals, Dr. Bigelow believed that the traditional churchyard burying ground in the crowded city posed a threat to the public health. The Massachusetts Horticultural Society wanted to establish an experimental garden, but lacked the funds. The two parties joined forces to create Mt. Auburn, which soon became popular as a serene place for strolling, solitude, and even picnics.<sup>60</sup> Whatever their intentions, Bigelow and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society had created a place which served as retreat from the bustle and commotion of urban life to a nearby pastoral setting which was quiet and well planted.

While Mt. Auburn Cemetery and 1820's Lowell were both physical examples of the middle state of American Pastoral Design, they speak of fundamentally different spatial conditions. Lowell in the 1820's may be classified as the "machine in the garden."

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<sup>59</sup>Ross L. Miller, "The Landscaper's Utopia Versus the City: A Mismatch," *The New England Quarterly*, June 1976, 179.

<sup>60</sup>Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 268.



This spatial condition was created in what had been a small pastoral village, far from any city. Industry (the textile mills) was spread along the banks of the Merrimack River and across the green fields of Lowell. "Art" (technology) and nature had a spatial balance which was lost with the growth of industry. This spatial condition was born largely out of capitalism and the free market, and so too did it die by it.

The spatial scheme of Mt. Auburn, Greenwood and Laurel Hill, and other great rural cemeteries, may be classified as the "garden near the machine." A pastoral setting was created near the urban center and provided respite from the dense inner city. The spatiality of the rural cemeteries was the result of a specific design intent, rather than being predominantly market driven.

The creation of Frederick Law Olmstead's Central Park in New York (1857) brought this progression one step further. With an explicit design intent and social agenda, Olmstead created a "garden in the machine," *completely within* the dense inner city. In Central Park, Olmstead sought to reinsert a "natural" or pastoral environment, albeit a man made one, into the already dense oppressive city and to completely shut out the city in the process. Olmstead even undertook to satisfy the requirement for four crossing streets within this design vision, by depressing these crossing streets well below grade so that the park would at least appear visually continuous. While the garden would exist in the very heart of the machine, Olmstead's intention was that berms and dense plantings around the perimeter of the park would shut the city out, and once inside the park, one would be unaware of the city. In Olmstead's words:

Practically, what we want most is a simple, broad, open space of clean greensward, with sufficient play of surface and a sufficient number of trees





to supply a variety of light and shade. This we want as a central feature. We want depth of wood enough about it not only for comfort in hot weather, but to completely shut out the cities from our landscapes.<sup>61</sup>

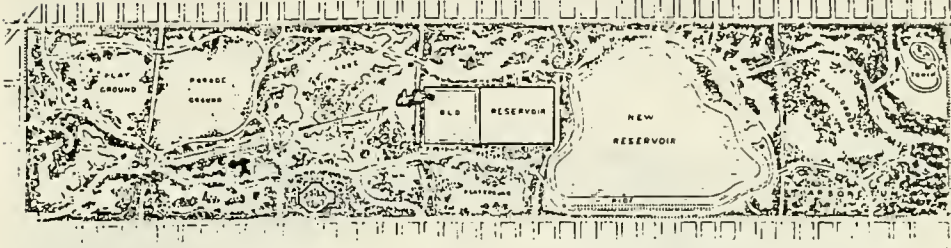


Fig. 5: Central Park, Olmstead and Vaux's 1857 competition design.

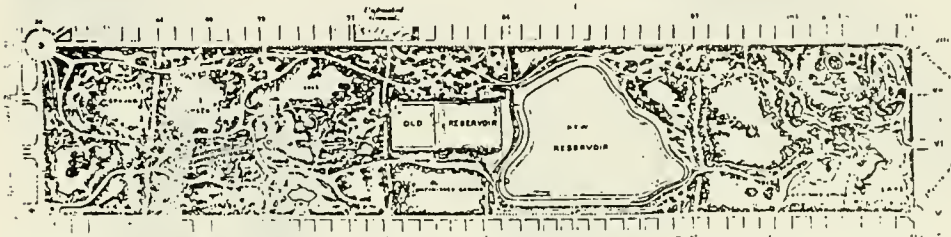


Fig. 6: Central Park, the modified winning design. Figs. 5,6 are from Newton, *Design on the Land*, 272.

Other large urban parks designed by Olmstead, such as Prospect Park in Brooklyn and Franklin Park in Boston, followed suit spatially. Each attempted to exist autonomously with respect to the city. However, outside of Franklin Park, Boston's Emerald Necklace takes on a very different spatial condition. In the linear parkways of the Jamaica Way, the Back Bay Fens, Charlesgate, and the Esplanade, one is almost always keenly aware of being in the city. The park does not shut out the city; rather, it is enriched by it. Some of the memorable places in the Emerald Necklace occur where the city and the park overlap. The battered walls of the H.H. Richardson's rugged stone bridge carry Boylston Street across the Back Bay Fens, while elegant balustrades

<sup>61</sup>Frederick Law Olmstead, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns," in S.B. Sutton, ed., *Civilizing American Cities: A Selection of Frederick Law Olmstead's Writings on City Landscapes* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), 80.



delineate the intersection of street and park at Charlesgate. While these designs were partly the result of the spatial constraints of the park system, the Emerald Necklace (outside of Franklin Park) nonetheless realized a more complex and intricately interwoven

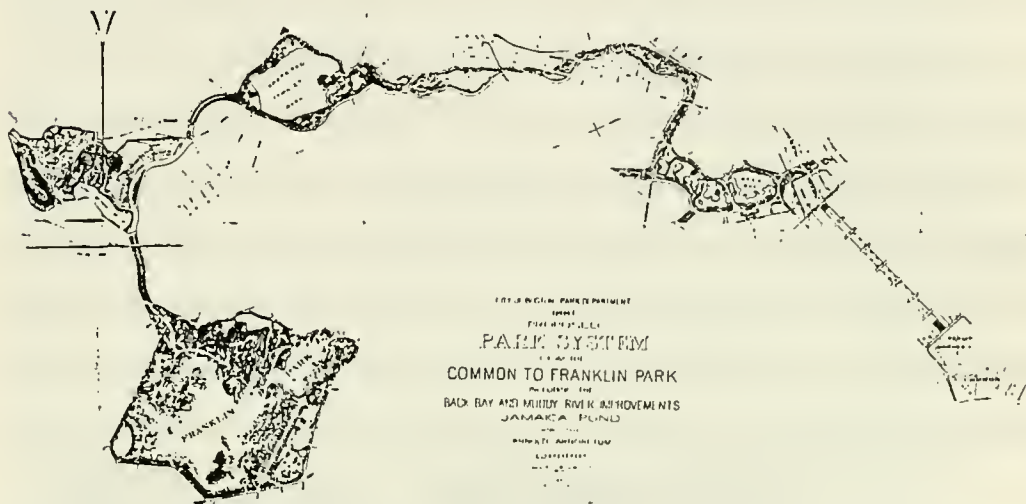


Fig. 7: Boston's Emerald Necklace, designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, as shown on the Park Commissioner's Report for 1886. Illustration from Newton, *Design on the Land*, 298.

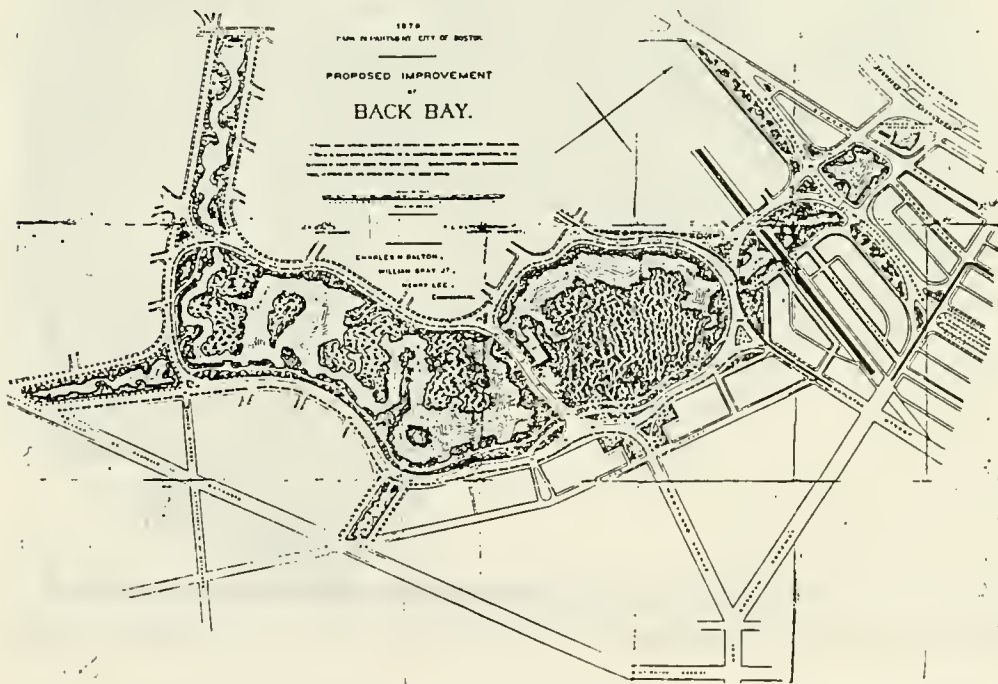


Fig. 8: Olmstead's plan for the Back Bay Fens. Illustration from Newton, *Design on the Land*, 292.





coexistence of the urban and the pastoral than was realized in Olmstead's Central, Prospect, or Franklin Parks.

The planned suburbs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mark still another spatial variation of the quest for a middle state of city/country. Instead of attempting to reinsert a pastoral element into an already dense city, planned suburbs such as Olmstead's Riverside (Illinois) and Roland Park (Baltimore) were designed on open land in an unconstrained context.<sup>62</sup> Riverside and Roland Park attempted to preserve a vanquished pastoral order in what had become a fully industrialized urban society. Olmstead's distaste for the density of the urban condition is apparent in these projects where he is presented the opportunity to design with a clean slate of open land. Gone is the urban sophistication of Charlesgate. Rather than trying to have both the urban and the rural, Olmstead's Riverside and Roland Park attempt to find a position *between* the two.



Fig. 9: Olmstead and Vaux's plan for Riverside, 1869. From Newton, *Design on the Land*, 466.

<sup>62</sup>For an account of the design of these two suburbs, see Newton, *Design on the Land*, 465-471.





Fig. 10: Typical street in Roland Park. From Newton, *Design on the Land*, 470.

In 1909, the Olmstead brothers began design work on Forest Hills Gardens on Long Island, New York. The younger Olmstead supervised the planning. Unlike the earlier Roland Park and Riverside suburbs, Forest Hills Gardens has a distinctly urban





aspect to it. The focus of the plan is Station Square, a center with a distinctly urban character.<sup>63</sup>



Fig. 11: Station Square at Forest Hills Gardens. Illustration from Newton, *Design on the Land*, 476.

At the tip of the Forest Hills Gardens, the masonry buildings of Station Square define the square in the most traditional urban sense. With its railroad station, inn, and arcaded shopping center, the square was intended to be the focus of the community. The high embankment of the Long Island Railroad forms the northeast boundary of the community. Through the railroad station, the great technological symbol of the railroad ties directly into Longwood gardens at its urban square. The arched opening under the inn forms a gateway to the rest of the development, where two greenways lead away from Station Square, widening to form Flagpole Green.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 475-476.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 476-477.



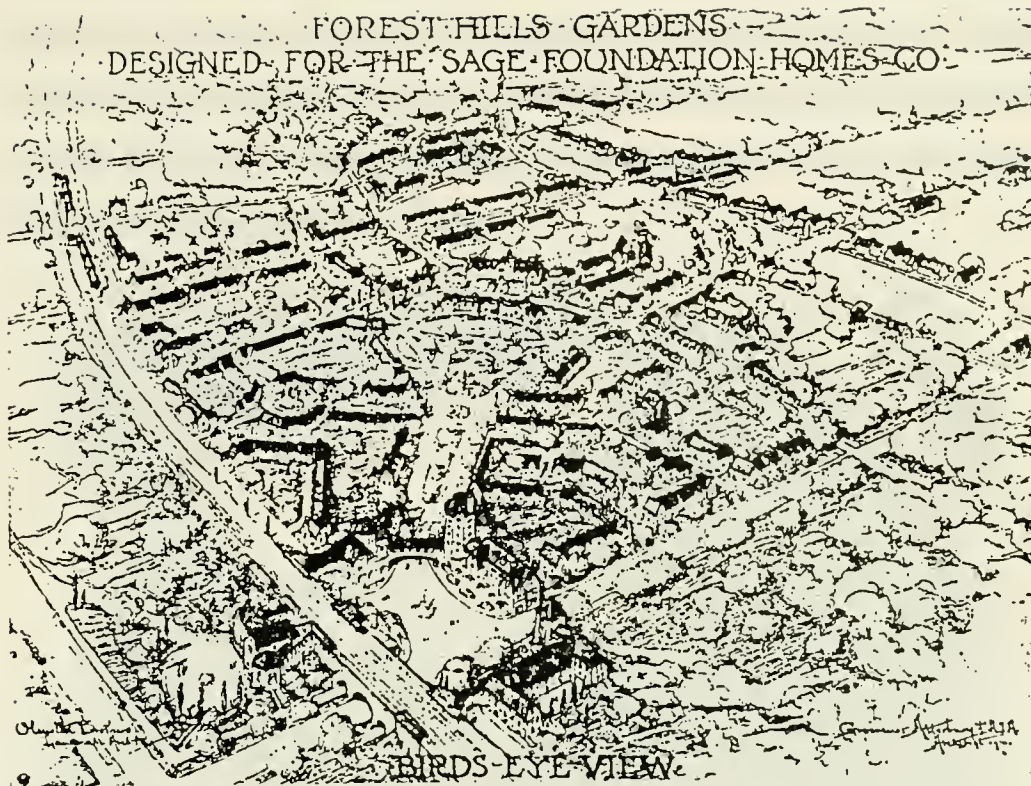


Fig. 12: Forest Hills Gardens. Illustration from Newton, *Design on the Land*, 477.

Compared with the earlier suburbs discussed herein, Forest Hills exhibits a much more profound coexistence of urbanity and technology (Station Square and the railroad) with rural simplicity, (the tree lined streets of small houses and the single family dwellings gathered around the common green). The two are physically connected by the two diverging greenways which begin together at Station Square and widen to form Flagpole Green farther down the road.

While the Olmstead projects are undoubtedly among the “high works” of American landscape architecture, other examples of this urban/rural coexistence may be seen in the common works. One such example is the industrial town of Chicopee, Georgia, laid out by Earl Summer Draper in 1927. The town center, consisting of two churches, two stores, and a community building formed a crescent at the heart of





Chicopee facing out to a large park. The industrial plant also bordered the park on the northwest. Behind the town center, a baseball field, a school site, and a park continued the stretch of green, so that the tree lined residential area of Chicopee was entirely bisected by a continuous stretch composed of fields and green space juxtaposed with an urban center and the industrial plant.<sup>65</sup>

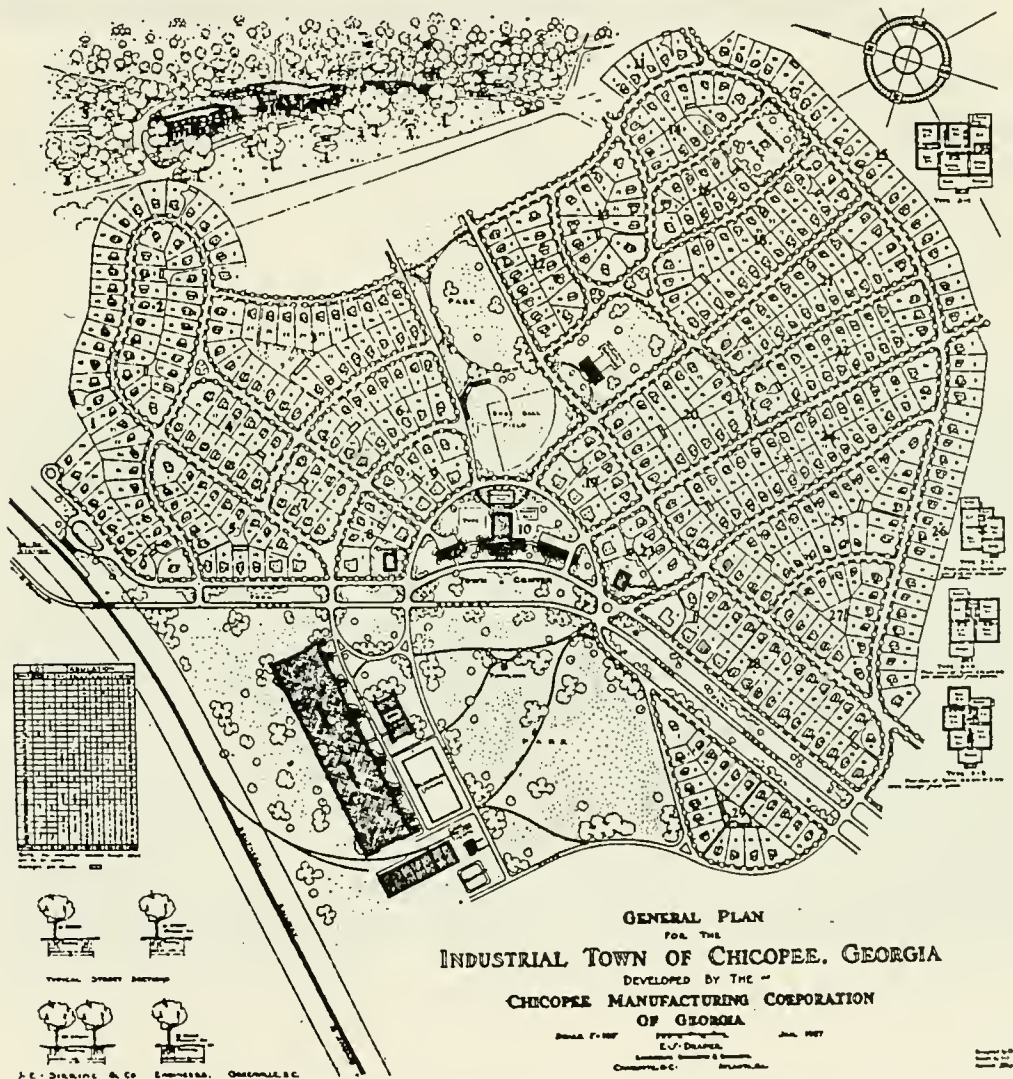


Fig. 13: General plan of Chicopee, Georgia by Earl Summer Draper, 1927. Illustration from Newton, *Design on the Land*, 488.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 486-489.



This chapter attempted to show that American aspirations for an ideal middle state that was both city and country existed indeed, and were not limited exclusively to one social class. The examples which I discussed in this chapter were selected in order to show the wider cultural context within which the urban major league baseball parks of 1909-1923 emerged. Having established their context in the second chapter, I will now examine these ballparks with respect to this context in the third chapter.





### THIRD:

The earliest ball fields consisted of a simple diamond inscribed in a vast green meadow. The outfield extended (at least theoretically) across the continent, and it included anything which lay beyond the cleared land, whether rivers, hills, or woods. While the earliest baseball games were played between clubs of New York City businessmen, the games themselves were not played in the city. A trip to the ball field involved leaving New York and taking a ferry to New Jersey and a pastoral site called, appropriately enough, Elysian Fields.<sup>66</sup>

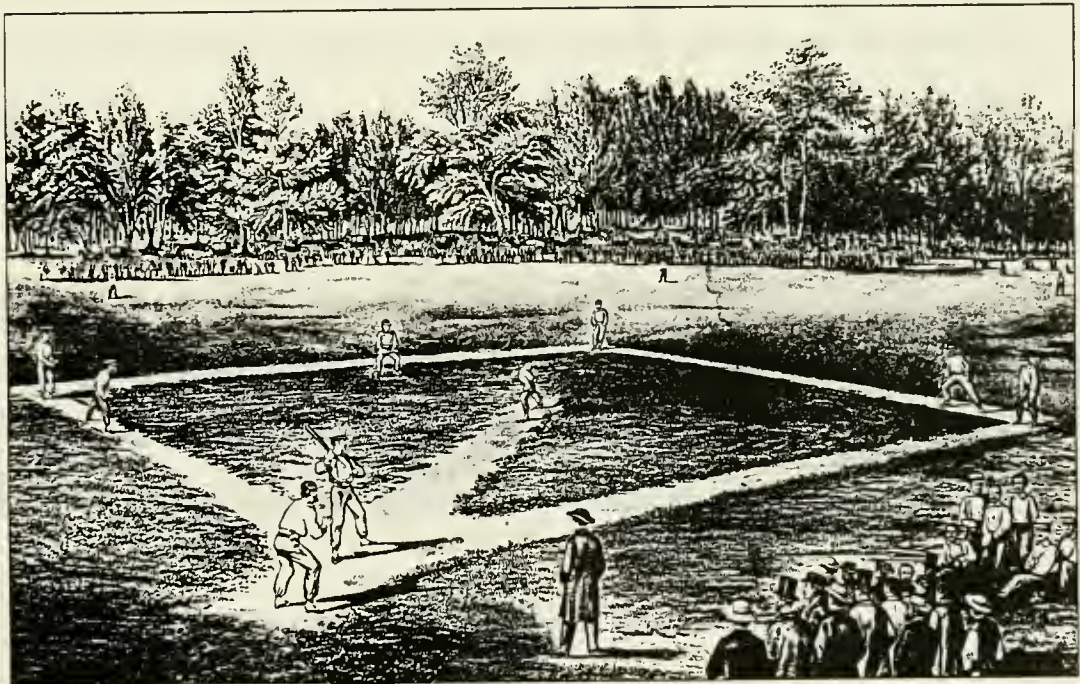


Fig. 14: Currier and Ives lithograph of Elysian Fields, dated 1865. Illustration from Gershman, *Diamonds*, 7.

The first organized game played between two clubs under more or less "modern" rules was on June 19, 1846. The game between the Knickerbockers Baseball Club of

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<sup>66</sup>Seymour, *Baseball*, 15.



New York and the New York Baseball Club was played at Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey. The Knickerbockers had secured the site as a permanent playing field. Elysian Fields was a four to five acre site fronting on the Hudson River and surrounded by woods. It was described as "one of the most picturesque and beautiful sites imaginable" and was accessible from New York by the Barclay Street Ferry.<sup>67</sup> Clearly, the first official baseball game in 1846 and the previous contests played amongst the members of baseball's first club involved a retreat from the city by the New York City gentlemen to a profoundly different landscape. In spatial terms, Elysian Fields parallels the paradigm of the rural cemeteries of the 1830's and 40's. Both may be classified as "the garden in the machine," for both Elysian Fields and the rural cemeteries offered a retreat from the clamor of the city to a nearby pastoral landscape for the purpose of leisure.

During the 1840's, when America's urban generation "sought new approaches to landscape that honestly reflected their urban experiences while also satisfying powerful yearnings to preserve a link with its rural past"<sup>68</sup>, not only did a trip to the baseball field involve a retreat to a more pastoral landscape, but also the form of the game itself preserved a link with America's rural past by embodying its agrarian ideals.

A few years later in 1851, A.J. Downing would write in support of the proposed construction of Central Park in New York:

That because it is needful in life for men to live in cities,- yes and unfortunately too, for children to be born and educated without a daily site of the blessed horizon, - it is not, therefore needful for them to be so

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*, 79.



miserly as to live utterly divorced from all pleasant and healthful intercourse with gardens, and green fields.<sup>69</sup>

Like the American city itself, the evolution of the ballpark gained a richness from the confluence of private entrepreneurship with aspirations of place. In 1858, fifty cents admission was charged for a series of games in Long Island between all star teams from Brooklyn and New York, in order to cover the cost of putting the grounds in order. As far as it is known, this was the first time people paid to watch a baseball game.<sup>70</sup>

While organized baseball began as a sport for wealthy New York businessmen, by 1857 it had spread to all classes.<sup>71</sup> Baseball enjoyed increasing popularity before the Civil War, and in the years following the war the popularity of the game exploded.<sup>72</sup> The economic incentive to capitalize on baseball's popularity lead to the "enclosure movement" of ballparks after the Civil War.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Olmstead's great urban parks such as Central Park in New York (1857) and Prospect Park in Brooklyn (1865) marked a change in spatial thinking. While the rural cemeteries and Elysian Fields provided a pastoral setting *near* the city, Central and Prospect Parks infused a representation of pastoral life directly into the city itself. The first enclosed baseball field, and hence the first true ballpark, followed this spatial strategy of the "garden *in* the machine."

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<sup>69</sup>Andrew Jackson Downing, *Rural Essays*, (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1853), 138.

<sup>70</sup>Seymour, *Baseball*, 25.

<sup>71</sup>Seymour, *Baseball*, 23-24.

<sup>72</sup>David Quentin Voigt, *American Baseball: Volume I, From Gentlemen's Sport to the Commissioner System* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 12.





The first enclosed baseball park was constructed by William Cammeyer. In 1862, Cammeyer invested considerable funds to grade the field, enclose the grounds and construct a clubhouse at the Union Grounds in Brooklyn. While this ballpark would seem primitive by the 1880's, at the time it was considered an "ornament" to Brooklyn. The ballpark consisted of numerous elements or structures scattered about the grounds, which covered about six acres. The field itself was well drained and was rolled perfectly level. A long wooden shed contained benches for the ladies and offered shelter from the elements. In one corner of the field was a clubhouse large enough for three teams. There were several other buildings scattered about the grounds; one was a saloon, one was likely used for collecting admissions, and the others were probably for storing equipment. There were also benches scattered about the grounds which enabled about 1500 people to be seated for a game.<sup>73</sup>

Using Marx's classifying terms, I would describe the Union Grounds in Brooklyn as sentimental pastoral design. Despite its urban site, the various buildings and structures which are scattered about the six acre grounds recall in a very direct way the spatial organization of an American farm, with its many separate structures dotting the landscape. At the Union Grounds, the insertion of the ballpark into an urban context has not impacted its form or spatial organization. While it seems logical for the saloon and some of the other small buildings to be freestanding structures, the dispersal of the seating throughout the grounds as separate benches particularly seems to demonstrate a rural rather than an urban sensibility.

While the earliest ballparks possessed an unbounded outfield, the economic motive to limit the view of a game to paying customers precipitated Cammeyer's creation

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<sup>73</sup>Seymour, *Baseball*, 48-49.





of Union Grounds. However, the location of the enclosing fences some five hundred feet from home plate bespeaks another notion. As the outfield was still seen as unbounded, the fence enclosing the outfield was located at a distance where it was presumably unreachable with a batted ball and would not come into play. This view would carry through in ballpark design roughly to the turn of the century. Thus, although the baseball parks of the New York area such as Union Grounds were now in the city, the outfield was still notionally an unbounded pastoral landscape which was uninfluenced by its urban location. This uncompromised pastoral representation within the urban fabric parallels Olmstead's great urban parks. In his design for Central Park in 1858, Olmstead created a representation of nature in the heart of New York City. His shaping of berms around the perimeter of the park blocked the view out to the street, and thus allowed the representation of nature within to be viewed without being disturbed by the clamor of the urban street scene, as described in Chapter Two. Both sought a representation of an idyllic setting within the urban fabric which was uncompromised by its urban setting.

The immense popularity of baseball in the years following the Civil War, and the resulting increase in potential revenues lead to a demand for greater seating capacities.<sup>74</sup> Ballparks of the 1880's and 90's were of wood construction, typically with larger scale grandstands behind home plate, or from first to third base, and often with smaller stands extending along the left and right field lines.<sup>75</sup> Although grandstands were double decked in some wood ballparks, susceptibility to fire made this practice questionable.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Brian James Neilson, "Dialogue with the City: The Evolution of Baseball Parks," *Landscape*, 29, no.1 (1986): 39.

<sup>75</sup>Michael Gershman, *Diamonds: The Evolution of the Ballpark*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 24-70.

<sup>76</sup>Philip Bess, preface to *Green Cathedrals* 1st ed. by Philip J. Lowry, (Cooperstown: Society of American Baseball Research, 1986), 10.



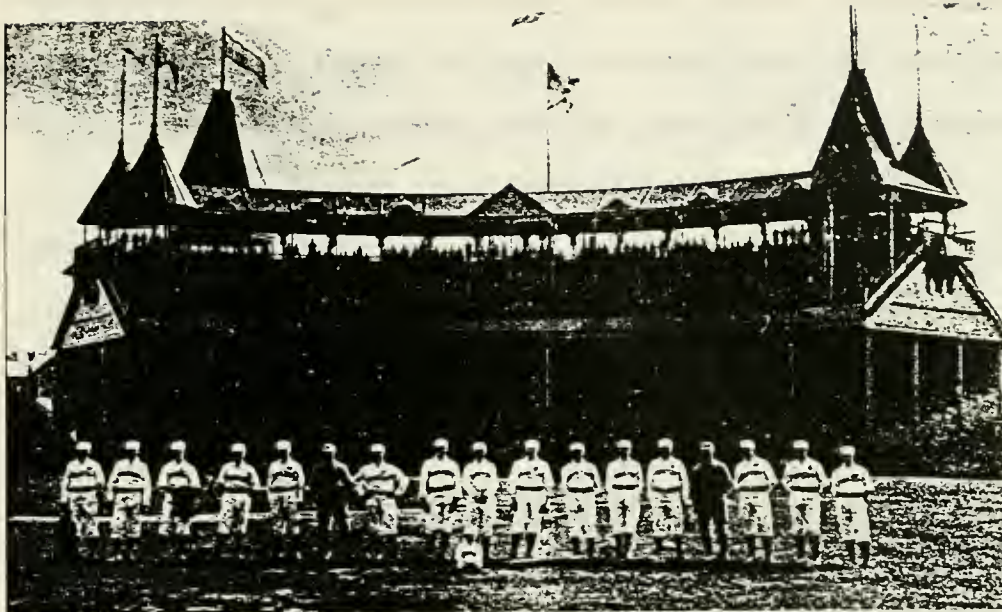


Fig. 15: Boston's South End Grounds. Illustration from Gershman, *Diamonds*, 43.

In comparison with Union Grounds in Brooklyn (1862), the wood baseball parks of the 1880's and 1890's displayed a greater urban sensibility with regard to the manner in which the seating was configured. However, the outfield fences were still well beyond the reach of a batted ball, thus the constraints of the urban location did not influence the configuration of the playing field. Although the wood ballparks of the 1880's and 90's were *in* the industrial city, the wood structures themselves still lacked an image of urban technology (what Marx terms the "technological counterforce") to bring them into juxtaposition with the pastoral game.<sup>77</sup>

Numerous ballparks built from 1890 to 1920 incorporated an earthen incline leading up to the base of the wall. While these inclines served the purpose of warning outfielders when they were approaching the wall, this could have been accomplished

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<sup>77</sup>See Chapter Two of this thesis for a discussion of the game of baseball as an objectification of pastoral and agrarian ideals.





more easily with a change in surface material, like the flat gravel "warning tracks" used in other locations. But the shaping of a small hill at the perimeter of the outfield recalled the early notion of the outfield extending unbounded, encompassing the distant hills, valleys, and other topographic features. One of the oldest parks in the minor leagues, Engel Stadium in Chattanooga, still has an outfield incline. An outfield incline was still in play in the major leagues until 1970 when Crosley Field in Cincinnati was razed.

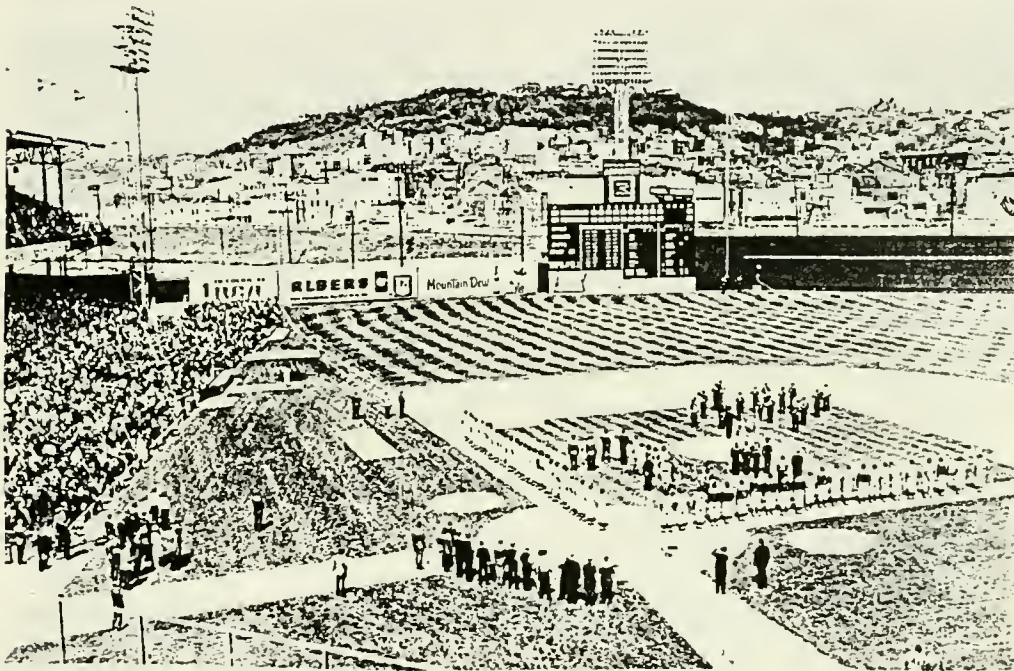


Fig. 16: Crosley Field in Cincinnati, 1969. Illustration from Reidenbaugh, *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*, 88.

Clark Field in Austin, Texas (1928-1974) literally incorporated the local topography into the field of play. A sheer cliff ran across the outfield, separating it into two tiers. This natural feature greatly affected the way in which games were played there and added an additional element of strategy to the positioning of fielders.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Michael Benson, *Ballparks of North America: A Comprehensive Historical Reference to Baseball Grounds, Yards and Stadiums, 1845 to Present* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland), 18.





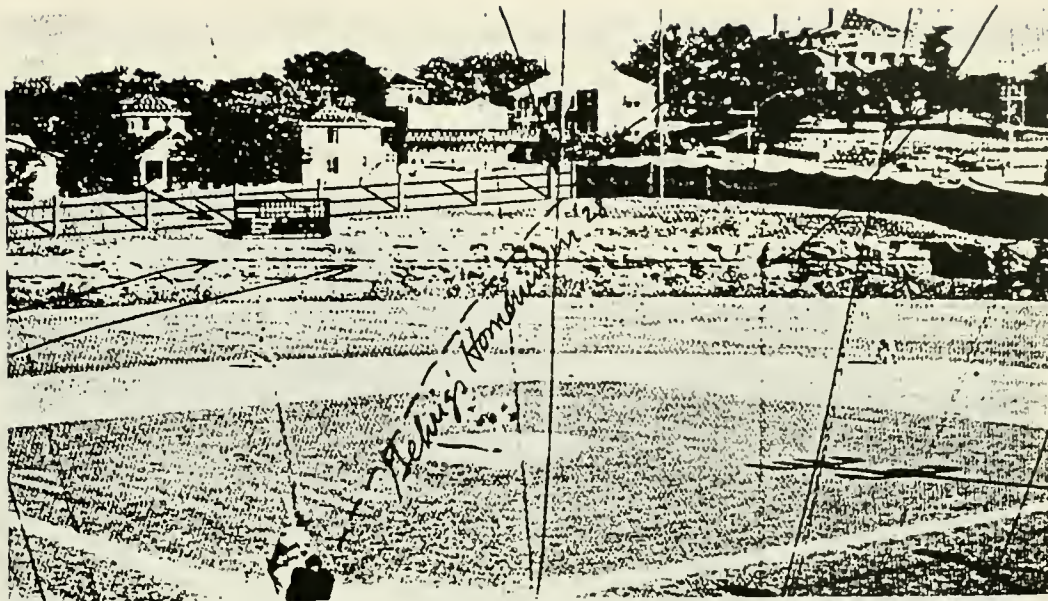


Fig. 17: Clark Field in Austin, Texas. Illustration from Lowry, *Green Cathedrals*, 2nd ed., 98.

After the turn of the century, increased attendance and susceptibility to fire rendered the wooden ballparks inadequate. With the drastic increase in the urban population at the turn of the century, economic considerations made it desirable to locate these ballparks within the city itself, where they would be easily accessible to the greatest number of people by public transportation.<sup>79</sup>

American engineering and building technology made the new urban ballparks possible. The "counterforce"<sup>80</sup> of the new steel and concrete design technology acted to support and redefine the pastoral ballpark by enabling the double decking of grandstands, thereby satisfying the need for greater seating capacity. The materials of the new technology improved upon the previous material (wood) by rendering the ballparks

<sup>79</sup>Neilson, "Dialogue with the City," 41.

<sup>80</sup>Marx asserts that "...it is industrialization, in the form of technology that provides the uniquely American counterforce in the American archetype of the pastoral design." Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 23.



virtually fireproof.<sup>81</sup> The visible steel structure and trusswork finally provided an image of urban technology for the new baseball parks. Their appearance was now fundamentally distinguished from their rural predecessor.

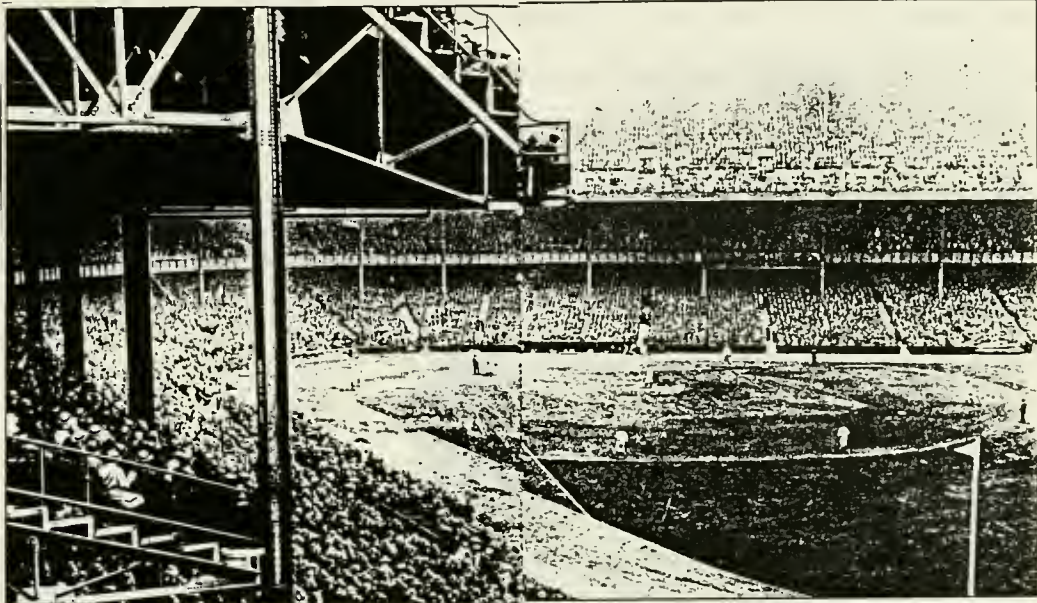


Fig. 18: Yankee Stadium, New York, during the 1926 World Series. Illustration from Reidenbaugh, *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*, 196-197.



Fig. 19: View through the trusses of the upper deck to the field below in Tiger Stadium, Detroit. The upper deck in right field is cantilevered out over the field of play. Photo collage by the author.

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<sup>81</sup>Neilson, "Dialogue with the City," 41.





At the scale of urban design, the new steel and concrete ballparks were typically built up to the street, so that the ballparks defined the space of the city. The cities also defined the space of the ballparks for the ballpark's configuration resulted from a dialogue that occurred between the spatial requirements of the field and the constraints of the urban fabric.<sup>82</sup> Through this dialogue, the agrarian ideals and pastoral simplicity of the game became inextricably woven together with the 'counterforce' of industrial technology in the urban setting. This complex coexistence of urban civilization and rural simplicity parallels Marx's literary examples of American Pastoral Design.

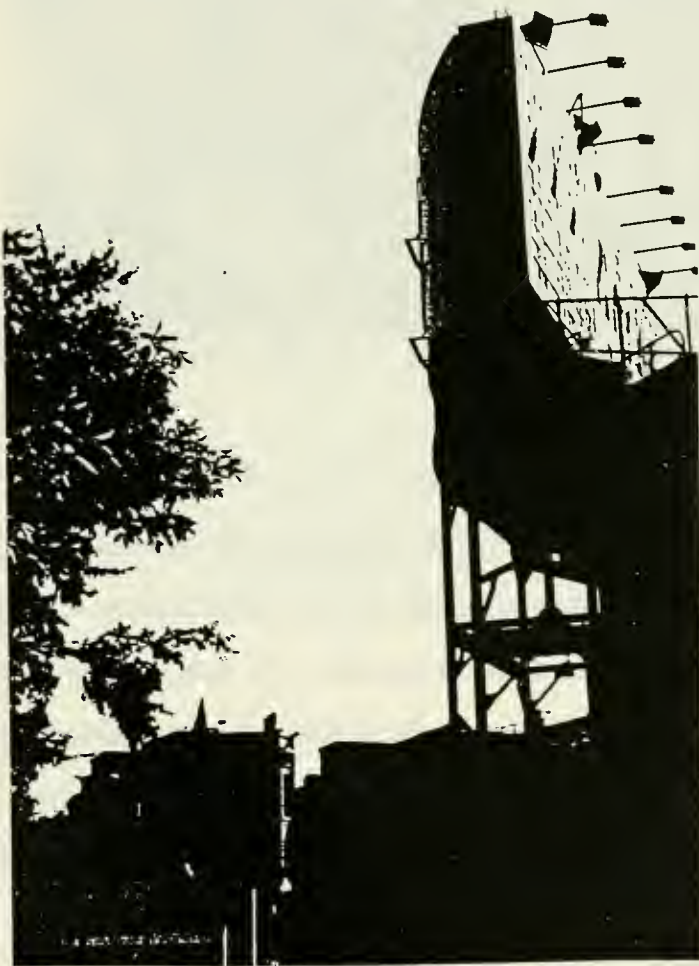


Fig. 20: View of the Wrigley Field scoreboard from the tree-lined residential neighborhood of Waveland Avenue, 1992. Photo by the author.

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid.



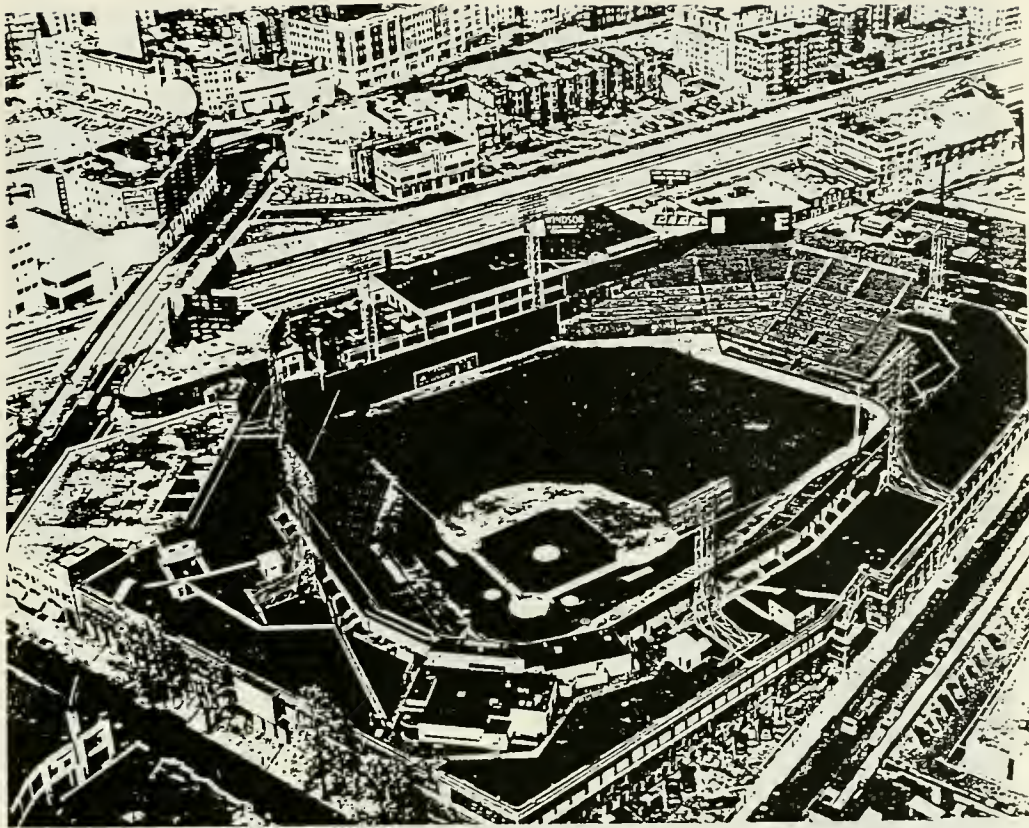


Fig. 21: View of Fenway Park in Boston, circa 1980. Illustration from Neilson, *Dialogue with the City*.

Because of its undefined and hence malleable nature, the outfield configuration became perhaps the most salient manifestation of this dialogue between the urban context and the pastoral field. The distances to the outfield fences ran the gamut from extremely close to home plate (i.e., easily reachable with a batted ball) to vast, practically unreachable distances, often within the same park. The distance down the foul line in the Polo Grounds was a mere 258 feet, an easily reachable distance, while the center field wall was a staggering 483 feet from home plate and was never struck by a batted ball.

The intersection of delineating streets outside the park, with the line of the bleachers inside the park resulted in irregular juts in the outfield walls at Ebbets Field, Fenway Park, and Crosley Field. At Griffith Stadium, a thirty one foot high center field





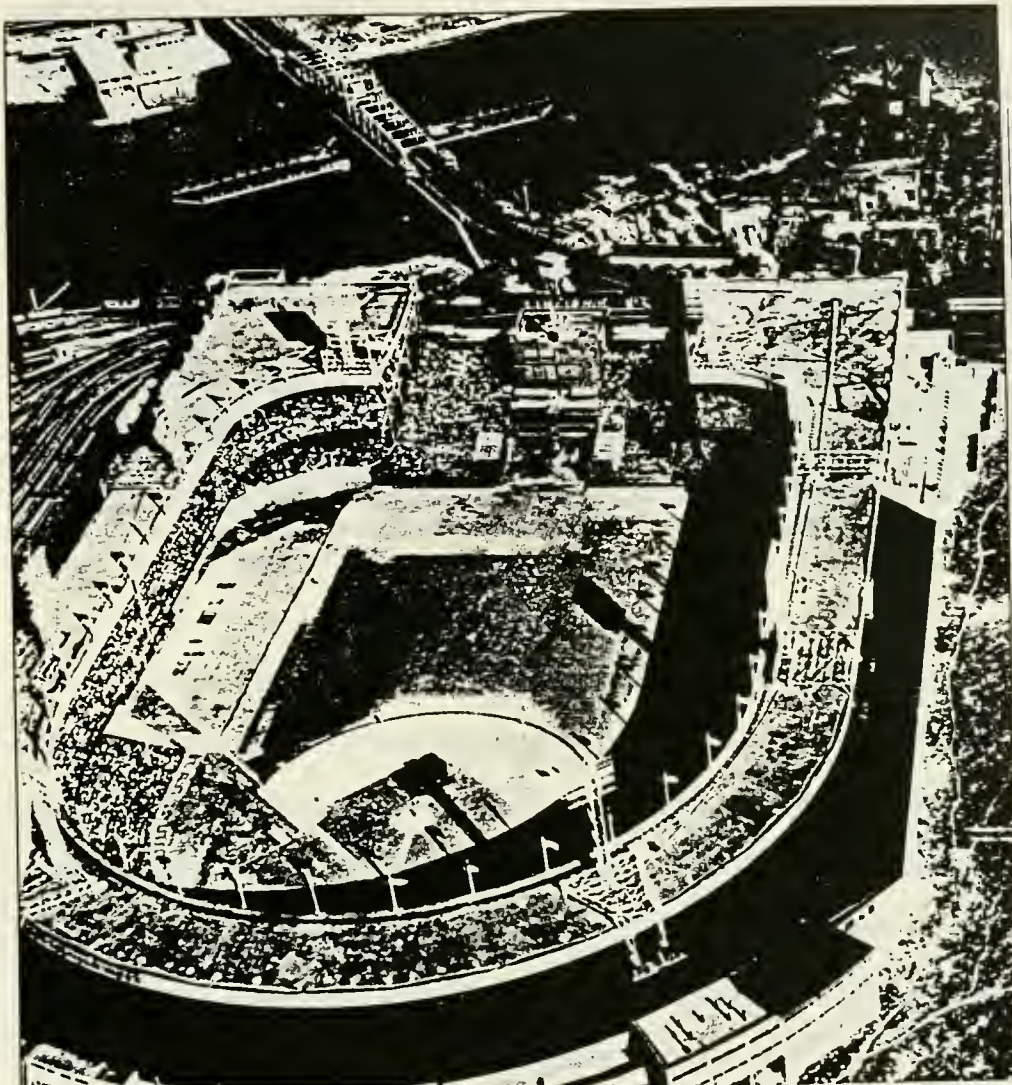


Fig. 22: The Polo Grounds in Manhattan. Illustration from Reidenbaugh, *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*, 171.

wall formed two right angles as it detoured around the five duplex houses which were behind center field. Although Fenway Park holds the only example of a large wall surviving in the major leagues today, the ballparks in Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh all possessed large walls which greatly affected the way games were played there. In all cases, these large walls served the purpose of protecting nearby buildings and pedestrians from airborne baseballs.



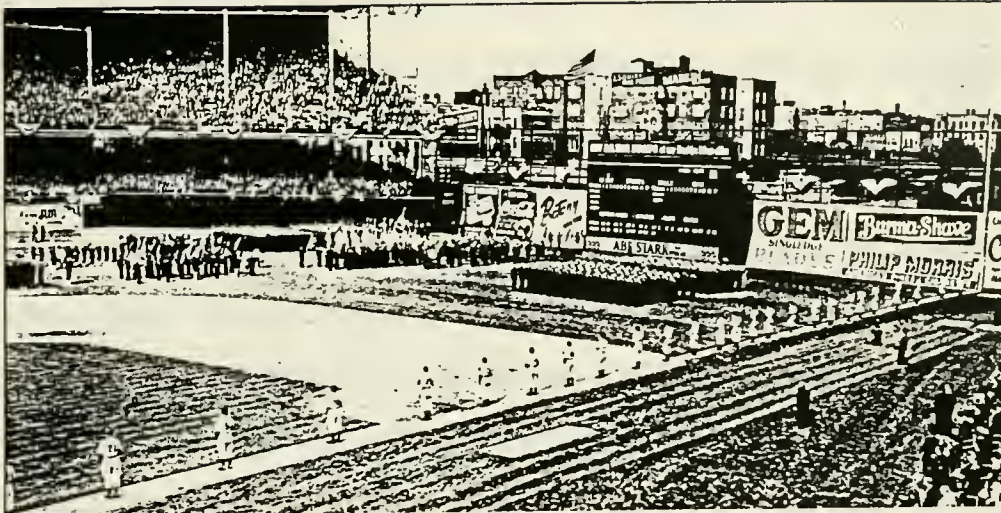


Fig. 23: View of center and right fields at Ebbets Field in Brooklyn. Illustration from Reidenbaugh, *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*, 59.

The manner in which the major league baseball parks of 1909-1923 were situated within the urban context not only redefined the configurations of the parks, but it also profoundly affected the way in which the game was played there. The game was enriched by the increased complexities and subtleties in play which these new boundaries created. The proximity of Lansdowne Street in Boston to home plate in Fenway Park gave rise to a monstrous thirty-seven foot wall, surmounted with a twenty-three foot, six inch screen. "The Wall" has added a richness and complexity to the games played there for the past six decades. The physical aberration of the left field wall may knock down line shots that would be home runs in other parks and reduces them to doubles or even singles. The converse is also true because the wall can transform a high wind blown pop into a game winning home run as was the case in the 1978 one game championship play-off between Boston and New York. Before being rebuilt in 1976, the wall in Fenway was constructed of wood timbers covered with tin sheeting. Balls which struck the wall above a timber would rebound sharply, while those which struck between the timber supports would drop softly closer to the base of the wall. While features such as the left field wall and the irregular jut in center field in Fenway Park or the cavernous expanse of left-center field





in Yankee Stadium may be viewed as peculiarities in comparison to the features (or lack thereof) of today's modern stadia, they were not uncommon among the parks of their day. For this dialogue between the field and its urban site constraints invariably resulted in features which, both, made the parks distinctive and created conditions which increased the possibilities of a batted ball in play. In this manner, the urban condition enriched the pastoral game. Because these parks took part in a dialogue with their specific urban context, they were inextricably woven into the urban fabric. In some cases, they also came to reflect the city fabric itself. The very orthogonal character of Shibe Park, and the right angle formed by the left and right field fences, with its vertex in center field is characteristic of the highly regular grid of Philadelphia. Manhattan's street pattern consists of long rectangular blocks, which helped give the Polo Grounds its distinctive oblong shape. The quirky, angular confines of Fenway Park are created by and are representative of Boston's irregular street pattern.

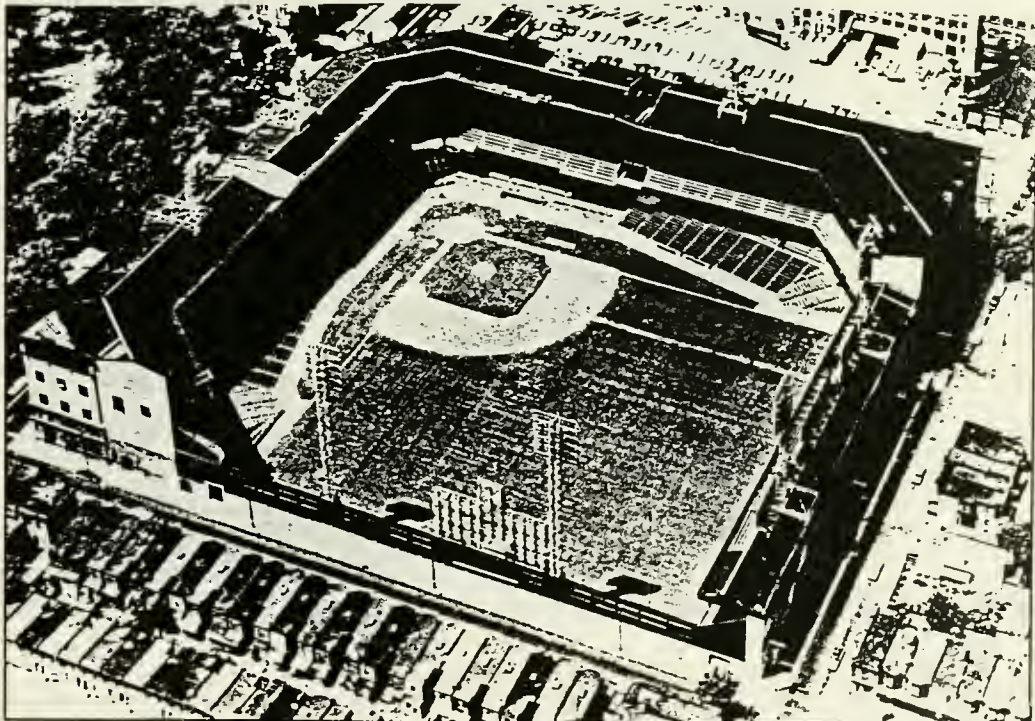


Fig. 24: Shibe Park in Philadelphia, probably in the 1960's. Illustration from Gershman, *Diamonds*, 210.





There have been two major periods of construction of major-league ballparks. The period of 1909-1923 saw the erection of fifteen steel and concrete ballparks in urban settings. While only three major league parks were built between 1924 and 1960, the period of 1960 to 1990 saw the construction of seventeen stadiums.<sup>83</sup> All but two of these "modern stadia" have been multi purpose facilities. The "modern" stadia, in contrast to their urban predecessors, are either situated in a suburban context or have cleared a huge site in the urban fabric, free from the normal urban constraints. Busch Stadium in St. Louis is one example of the latter.

To use Marx's terms, the baseball parks of the 1800's may be characterized as "romantic pastoralism," that is, they represented a retreat to an idealized rural landscape. The urban baseball parks of 1909-23 exemplify "American Pastoral Design." In these

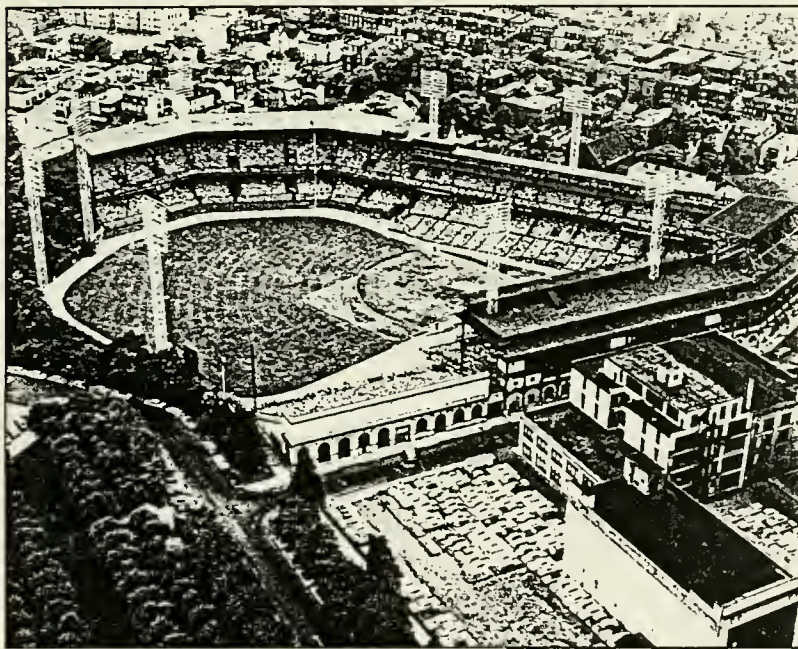


Fig. 25: Forbes Field in Pittsburgh, 1960. Illustration from Reidenbaugh, *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*, 223.

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<sup>83</sup>Philip J. Lowry, *Green Cathedrals: The Ultimate Celebration of All 271 Major League and Negro League Ballparks Past and Present*, 2nd ed.(Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley, 1992), 9.



ballparks, urban civilization and technology came into a profound and complex coexistence with rural simplicity, creating a place where city polish and pastoral innocence could be simultaneously enjoyed.

The stadiums of 1960 to 1990 defy classification in terms of Marx's definitions of strains of pastoralism for they no longer exemplify pastoralism. Nor do they embody urbanity. Instead of being shaped by their specific sites, like the ballparks of 1909-1923, the stadium became a universalized, autonomous form. The idiosyncrasies of the earlier ballparks have been removed in the rationalized circular forms of the modern multi purpose stadia. While the earliest nineteenth century ballparks had a completely

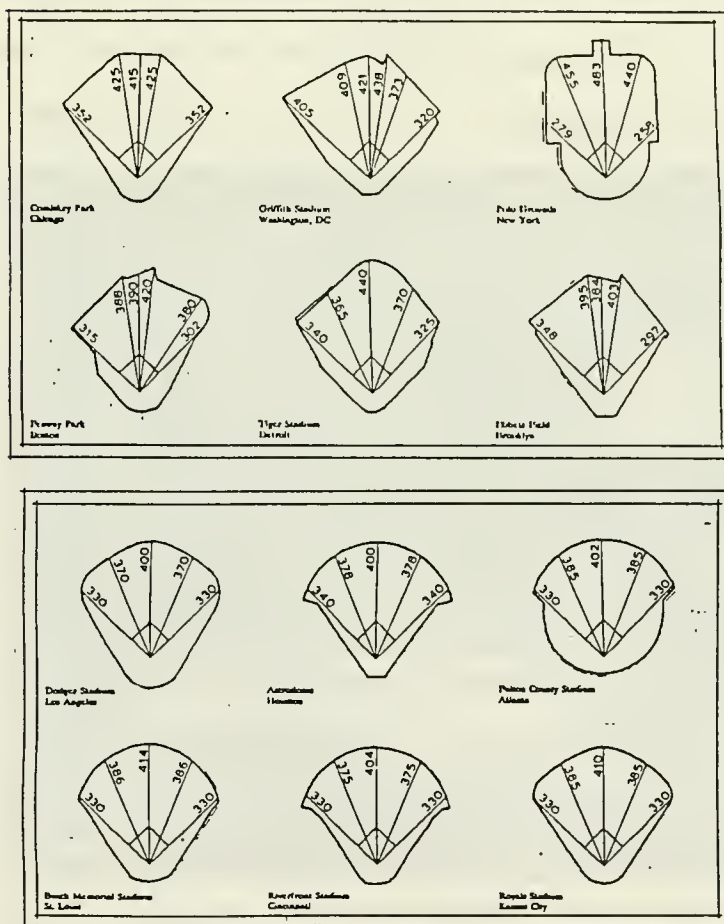


Fig. 26: A comparison of outfield configurations and dimensions between the ballparks of 1909-1923 (top) and the post 1960 stadia (bottom). Illustration from Philip Bess, *City Baseball Magic*.





unbounded outfield, which expanded out infinitely into the landscape, the ballparks of 1909-1923 offered differing views and representations of the landscape in the outfield. In addition to the highly varied outfield distances, these ballparks offered low fences, high walls, earthen inclines, bleachers, scoreboards and skyline vistas within a panoramic view across the outfield. Often elements within the landscape of the outfield (flagpoles, scoreboards, or even the monuments of Yankee Stadium or a ladder in Fenway Park) were within the field of play. In the modern stadia, all elements formerly within the landscape of the outfield (like flagpoles) have been removed. The outfield configuration has become regularized.

The intimate scale of the ballparks of 1909-1923 further distinguishes them from the later multi purpose stadia. While the term "intimate" may sound highly subjective, it is not. Philip Bess has compared the ballparks of 1909-1923 with the "modern" multi purpose stadia of the post 1960 era. The ballparks of the earlier era are smaller in size



Fig. 27: The final game played at old Comiskey Park (left), September 30, 1990. Note how much farther the upper deck is from the playing field in New Comiskey Park (right), both in terms of vertical and horizontal distance. Illustration from Gershman, *Diamonds*, 228.



than the modern stadia. Additionally, the modern stadia have the upper deck placed above *and behind* the lower deck, so as to eliminate the need for columns. In the older parks, the upper deck is *directly above* the lower deck placing almost half of the spectators considerably closer to the field, thus making the older parks more intimate.<sup>84</sup>

Consequently, the experience of watching a baseball game, and the sense of place in the modern multi purpose stadia such as Veterans Stadium, Three Rivers Stadium, and Riverfront Stadium are altogether different than in ballparks of the 1909-1923 era, such as Ebbets Field and Fenway Park.

In her childhood, Doris Kearns Goodwin regularly visited Ebbets Field in

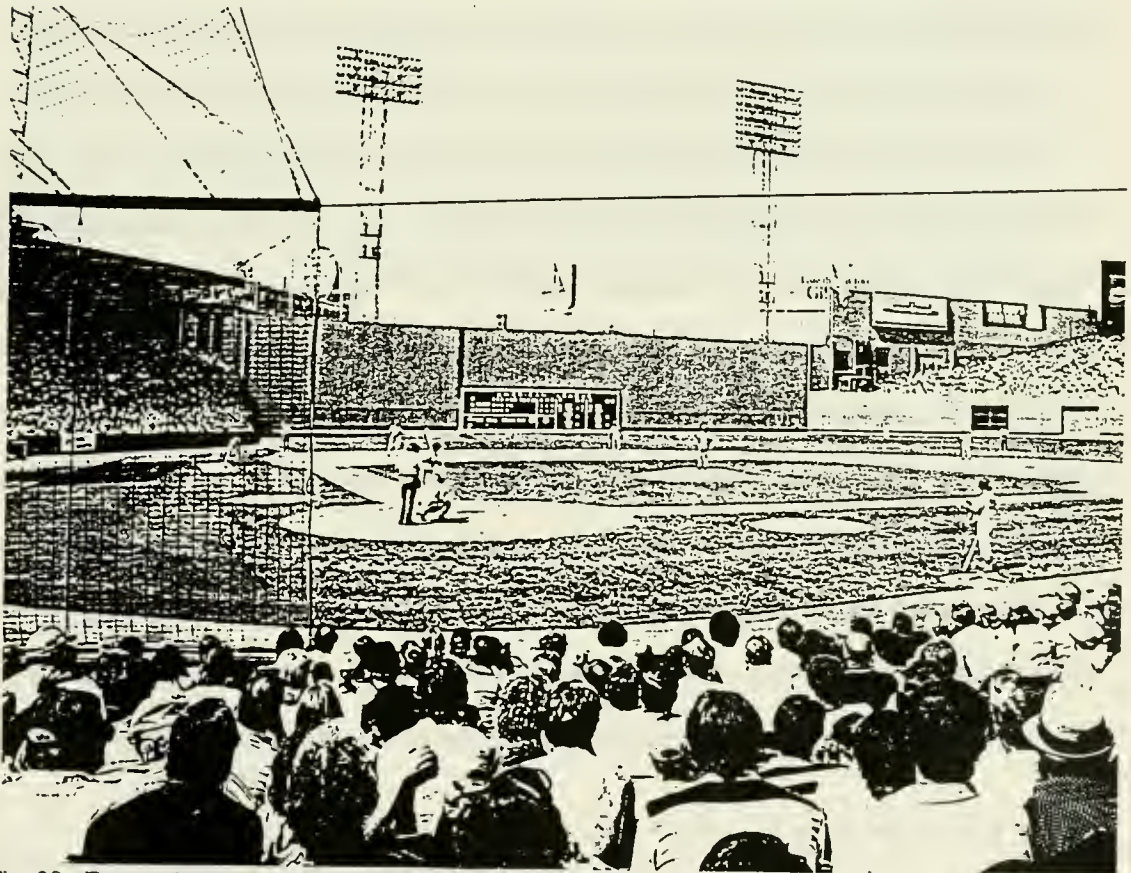


Fig. 28: Fenway Park in Boston viewed from the stands. Illustration from Reidenbaugh, *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*, 35.

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<sup>84</sup>Bess, *City Baseball Magic*, 8, 11-13.





Brooklyn. Having not been to a ballpark for many years, she was persuaded to attend a ball game. Of this experience, Goodwin wrote: "I agreed, half reluctantly to go to Fenway Park. There it was again: the cozy ball field scaled to human dimensions so that every word of encouragement and every scornful yell could be heard on the field..."<sup>85</sup> It is the intimate scale of Fenway Park and Ebbets Field that facilitates this connection of place and experience.

In *The Art of Memory*, Francis Yates relates how an architecture of specificity can serve as an aid to memory. The niches, the recesses, the spaces between columns, and the other secondary spaces of architecture can serve as a sort of 'honeycomb' in which the mind can store and associate specific people, things, or events to be remembered.<sup>86</sup> In the ballparks of 1909-1923, the procession of columns around the park, the large steel trusses, the overhanging roofs and upper decks, and the irregular configurations and idiosyncrasies all create specific spaces within the parks which can serve to store memory. By contrast, in the stadiums of 1960-1989, the columns have been removed, the upper deck has been placed above and behind the lower deck rather than directly above it, and the configuration of the outfield and the park itself have been regularized. Thus the modern multi purpose stadiums of the post 1960 era typically became one large, exposed, alienating, nondescript, bowl shaped space, without columns to break down the scale of the whole, and without the secondary spaces and idiosyncrasies which can serve as an aid to memory in the ballparks of the 1909-1923 era. The view around the perimeter of the outfield in the multi purpose stadia has become completely confined, with no notion of a

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<sup>85</sup>Doris Kearns Goodwin, "From Father with Love," in "Literati on the Red Sox," ed. Vince Doria, *Boston Globe*, 6 October 1986, special section, 16,17.

<sup>86</sup>See Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), chapters 1, 4. For a literary version of the same idea, also see Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harvest HBJ, 1972), 15-16.



landscape beyond the field (although some baseball-only stadia built during this period are exceptions, notably Royals Stadium). The use of synthetic grass in most of the modern stadia is an example of the decrease in the tendency to express the outfield as an expanding landscape. In a number of these stadia, a heavy emphasis is placed on the role

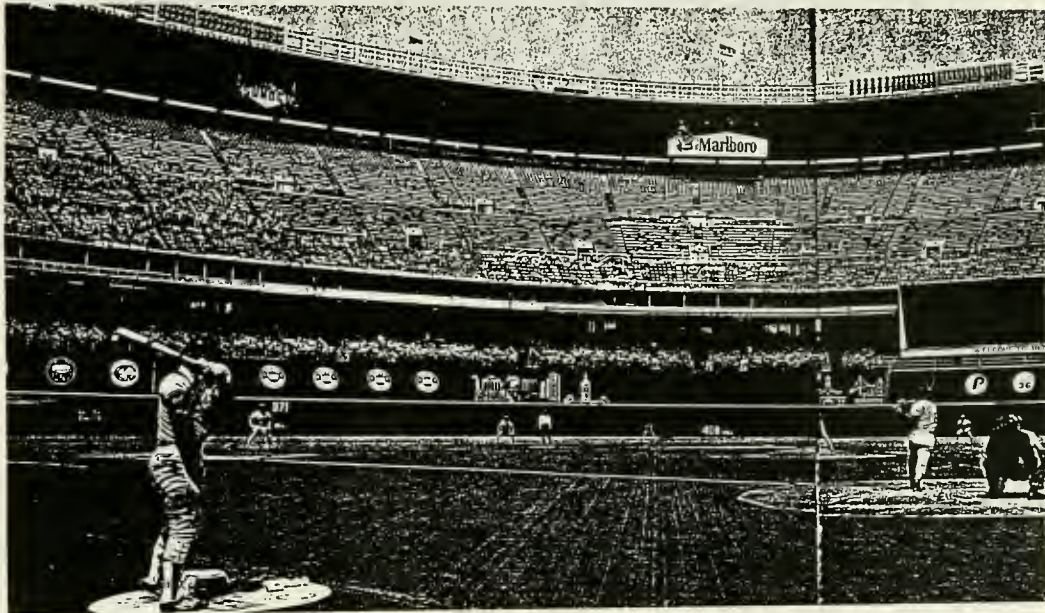


Fig. 29: View from behind home plate towards the outfield in Veteran's Stadium, Philadelphia. Illustration from Reidenbaugh, *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*, 252-253.

of enormous video screens in the fans' perception of the game, sometimes to the extreme point of the screen itself becoming the focus of attention rather than the action on the field itself.<sup>87</sup>

The domed stadiums, three of which were constructed for major league use during this period, represent the ultimate conquest of nature by technology.<sup>88</sup> The dome creates a total exclusion of the natural world from the field of play. The climate, the grass, and the light are all technological "improvements" of nature.

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<sup>87</sup>Neilson, "Dialogue with the City," 46-47.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 45.



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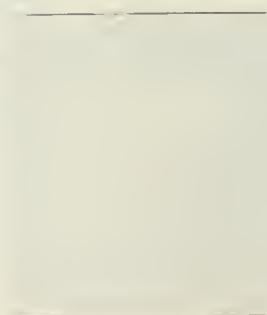






Fig. 30: The Astrodome in Houston. Illustration from Reidenbaugh, *Take Me Out to the Ballpark*, 105.

A great deal of attention has been given to the traditional urban ballparks in the last few years. The new Comiskey Park in Chicago and Camden Yards in Baltimore, opened in 1991 and 1992 respectively, have been the first parks to have felt this influence. Both were designed by the architecture firm of Hellmuth Obata & Kassabaum, Inc. (H.O.K.), who designed many of the circular multi purpose modern stadia. However, these two parks involve different approaches. The new Comiskey Park, like the modern stadia, cleared enough land around its old site to be a completely autonomous structure which was removed from any possible influence by its urban context. It is a modern stadium on which a traditionalistic (or more properly, post-modern) facade has been applied. In an ideologically similar move, a replica of the old Comiskey Park scoreboard was built for the new stadium. These details typify a superficial design approach which seeks to create





a traditional look, but fails to understand what makes the traditional urban ballparks significant and meaningful.

Clearly, the construction of Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore made a departure from recent precedent. While certain elements such as the traditionalistic scoreboard, the ornamented aisle seat brackets, and the “hit it here” sign on the right center field wall suggest an overtly nostalgic design approach, other, more important design decisions reflect a more astute understanding of the lessons to be learned from the ballparks of the 1909-1923 era. A downtown site was chosen for the ballpark, which is only a short walk from inner harbor and the heart of downtown Baltimore. The urban fabric was allowed to engage in a dialogue with the ballpark as an existing railroad warehouse was retained for offices, and the playing field was sited such that the warehouse became part of the park, within the reach of a long home run. The right field flood lights were mounted atop the warehouse roof, further reinforcing the notion that the

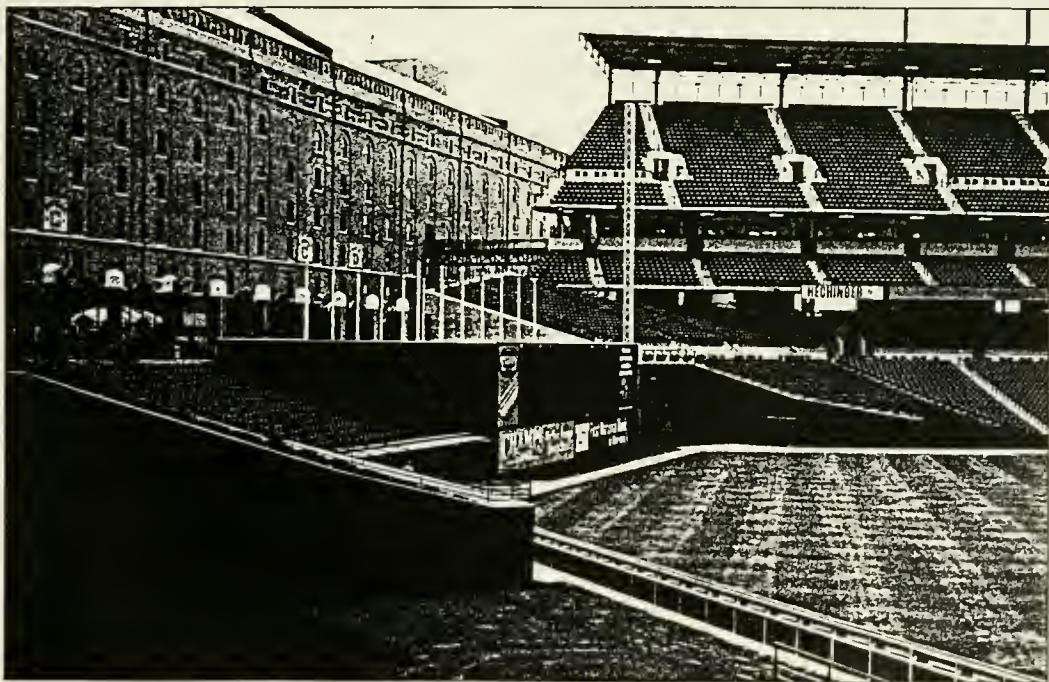


Fig. 31: View across right field, Camden Yards, Baltimore. Illustration from Gershman, *Diamonds*, 222.



warehouse is a part of the park. The orientation of the field also creates for a view of the skyline beyond the center field scoreboard, and the heights of the outfield fences vary widely. The overall configuration of the outfield is asymmetrical, and the wall possesses numerous angles. A most interesting development is the tiering of the two bullpens above the field, so that a terraced effect is created beyond the left-center field fence, an innovative interpretation of the notion that the outfield is a part of a larger landscape. Additionally, the complex steel structure supporting the roof and lights above the upper deck is completely exposed, creating a technological image of black trusswork which wraps entirely around the top of the upper deck. Camden Yards has enjoyed considerable success since its opening, and the credit for the huge leap in Baltimore attendance from 1991 to 1992 must be given to the new ballpark.

By following the paradigm of the traditional urban ballparks, Camden Yards has achieved a result which reminds us of what was truly remarkable about the urban baseball parks of 1909-1923; that consciously or subconsciously, they realized a desire, deeply rooted within the American culture, for a place where urban civilization and pastoral innocence coexist and can be simultaneously enjoyed.



## HOME AGAIN:

Having examined the major league baseball parks of 1909-1923 in terms of both the physical artifacts themselves and the cultural content from which they arose, let us return again to where we began:

It was too small. The public urinals were fetid troughs. Its architecture suggested a mail order tool shed, and every August the grass began to die. Then work crews had to spray the outfield with green paint. There weren't enough seats and the parking was impossible... When the wreckers came in 1957, I felt no pangs. Walter O'Malley was a money man. The place was too damn small. Let it go, let it go, like the past. Now through the years it haunts me like the fresh faced ardent girl you never married...<sup>89</sup>

Roger Kahn, on Ebbets Field

In the third chapter, I emphasized that the ballparks of 1909-1923 were objects of cultural production and, consciously or subconsciously, embody larger currents of thought within the culture. I offered an interpretation of these ideas and ideals by examining the physical characteristics of these ballparks, i.e., the proximity of their stands to the field of play, their walls and boundaries, their outfield configurations, and other characteristics. However, as the quote above suggests, the ballparks of 1909-1923 were more than the sum of their elements. Together the tangible and intangible aspects of the *place* transcend the mere sum of its wooden seats, its stained urinals, its rusted steel, and its painted concrete. Kent Ryden, in his excellent book *Mapping the Invisible Landscape*, has cited Tuan's definition of place as "...a center of meaning constructed by experience" and gone on to add that:

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<sup>89</sup>Kahn, "In the Catbird Seat," 34,41.





Since places are fusions of experience, landscape and location, they are necessarily bound up with time and memory as well. The experiences which create and establish places recede inevitably into the past, so that one important quality of places is that they are 'the present expressions of past and present experiences and events' - contemplation of place quickly brings to mind earlier stages in one's life, episodes in the history of a community, formative and notable events and experiences. The landscape of a place is an objectification of the past, a catalyst for memory.<sup>90</sup>

The urban major league baseball parks of 1909-1923 are common shared landscapes which evolved and acquired meaning over time. They are fusions of experience, location, landscape, technology, and aspirations which are bound up with time and memory. The field of play and the game itself objectify the ideals and emblems of an agrarian democracy and the cultivated green landscape through which it defined itself. The urban setting of the parks, and their industrial imagery of steel trusses, metal pipe railings, and silver light stanchions bring to mind the urban industrial forces that were brought to bear against the agrarian vision and drastically reshaped the American landscape. The rural ballpark was transformed and redefined by its insertion into the city fabric, and these changes greatly enriched the game of baseball itself and the manner in which it was played in these parks. Not only are the major league ballparks of 1909-1923 present expressions of past experiences and events in America's history, but they also exist as part of a continuum of manifestations of American aspirations for a place where urbanity and industrial technology coexist in a profound way with agrarian virtue and pastoral innocence. These ballparks are among the most significant physical realizations of this deeply rooted American desire. Perhaps that is why the ballparks have had such a lasting grip on the heart and mind of America. Perhaps that is why we find them so hard to forget.

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<sup>90</sup>Kent Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing and the Sense of Place*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 39.



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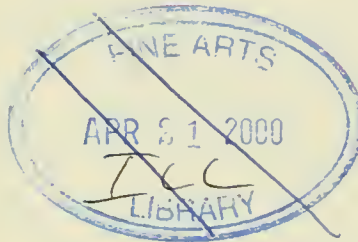
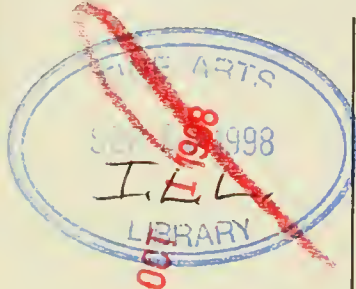


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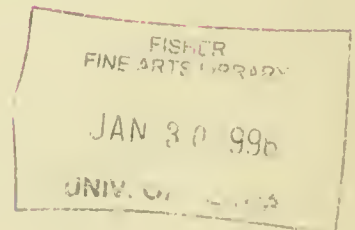
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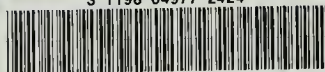


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